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ATTILA AND THE HUNS

ATTILA AND THE HUNS

BY

EDWARD HUTTON

AUTHOR OF "RAVENNA"

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1915

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TO

BELOVED ITALY

WITH WHOM

IN THIS HOUR

OF RENEWED PERIL

ONCE MORE

WE FIGHT

THE BARBARIANS

A.D. 401–1915

INTRODUCTION

"There is a race on Scythia's verge extreme
Eastward beyond the Tauris' chilly stream.
The Northern Bear looks on no uglier crew;
Bare is their garb, their bodies foul to view,
Their souls are ne'er subdued to sturdy toil
Or Ceres' webs. Their sustenance is spoil.
With horrid wounds they gash their brutal brows
And o'er their murdered parents bind their vows. . . "

IN these words, Claudian the poet of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, describes the Huns of the fifth century, the brood of Attila to whom the German Kaiser appealed before the whole world when he sent his brother to China to meet the Boxers :—

"When you meet the foe you will defeat him. No quarter will be given, no prisoners will be taken. Let all who fall into your hands be at your mercy. Just as the Huns a thousand years ago under the leadership of Attila gained a reputation in virtue of which they still live in historic tradition, so may the name of Germany become known in such a manner in China that no Chinaman will ever again dare even to look askance at a German."

These words will never be forgotten, for they have since been translated into action not only upon the Chinese but upon the body of Europe, upon the Belgians and the people of Northern France as upon the long martyred people of Poland.

That appeal to the Hun startled Europe, and yet had we remembered the history of Prussia, had we recalled the ethnology of that race we ought not to have been surprised, for the Hun and the Prussian have certainly much in common even racially, and Attila, or Etzel, as the Germans call him, has ever played his part in the Nibelungenlied and the legends of the Prussian people.

We know so little of the Huns of the fifth century: who they were, whence indeed they came and whither they went, that it is impossible definitely to assert or to deny that the Prussians of to-day are their actual descendants. We must, it seems, give up the old theory which Gibbon took from De Guignes that this savage people were identical with the Hioung-nou whose ravages are recorded in the history of China; but of this at least it seems we may be sure, that they were a Turanian race, a race to which the Finns, Bulgarians and Magyars also belong as well

as the Croatians and the Turks. Can we with any certainty claim that the Prussians also are of this family ?

Quatrefages has demonstrated that the population of the Prussias is by its ethnological origin essentially Finno-Slavian. In every respect, he asserts, and history bears him out, Prussia is ethnologically distinct from the peoples she now rules over under the pretence of a unity of race with them. Identity of language may mask this truth, but it cannot alter it, for the difference is real and fundamental.

Teutonic Germany has accepted Prussia as its sovereign, and no one can question her right to do so; but being what she is, she has been led astray by an anthropological error. Not content with subordinating herself to these Finno-Slavs the real Germany has adopted their hatred and worked out the brutal instincts of these strangers whose iron yoke she has placed upon her nobler spirit. Her union with Prussia has been founded by the sword and by blood, cemented by war and crowned by spoliation. It is a crime not less than the crime of that Attila to whom Prussia appeals as her true and original hero, and now, as then, we have the right to believe

in a divine Nemesis. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ?

It would seem, then, that as well physically as spiritually the Prussians in so far as they are Finnic[1] are of the same Turanian stock to which the Huns belonged and if only thus related to them. That the relationship is closer still a thousand things of which we are witnesses to-day, as for many hundred years past, would lead us to surmise. And if they are not the same Barbarians, their barbarism is the same.

It was at any rate Attila's name that Kaiser Wilhelm II flung across an astonished world a decade ago as the French might cry out upon Charlemagne or Blessed Joan of Arc or Napoleon. And since he has appealed to the Huns, to the Huns let him go.

For us there remain these facts to be considered, if, as is so difficult, we are to benefit from the lessons of History.

Rome always defeated the Barbarians, but

[1] Godron says with truth : "The Prussians are neither Germans nor Slavs ; the Prussians are the Prussians. But one must remember that they were of Finno-Slavonic race, not Teutonic, and were subject to the King of Poland till comparatively recent times. They remained heathen long after the rest of Germany was Christianised."

never succeeded in destroying their power to renew the attack. Stilicho defeated Alaric whenever he met him, yet Alaric at last entered Rome. Aetius broke Attila repeatedly, yet Attila at last was able to threaten Italy. Belisarius and Narses broke Vitiges and Totila, yet these Barbarians ruined the peninsula. In spite of defeat the attack was always renewed, because Rome had never really broken the Barbarian power. And if we to-day spare the Germanies the uttermost price and the last, if we fail to push this war to the bitter and the necessary end, in twenty years or in fifty they will fall upon us again and perhaps in an hour for us less fortunate. Delenda est Carthago.

It was perhaps not within the power of Rome to break once and for all the advance of the Barbarians. Time has been upon our side. To-day if our courage and our endurance are strong enough, if we set our face like a flint, we may once for all rid Europe of this Barbarian peril, which, now as always intent on the destruction and the loot of civilisation, pleads necessity, invokes its gods, and knows neither justice nor mercy.

Rome could not mobilise: we can. In the old days the Barbarians could break off

first the point, as it were, of civilisation, then a little more, and so on till the butt choked them. They can no longer do that. The railway and the automobile, the telegraph and the telephone have endowed us with such a power of mobilisation that we can compel the Barbarians to meet the butt of civilisation first instead of last. If we have the will we may destroy once and for all the power of the Barbarians, who have attempted to destroy civilisation, not only under Alaric, Attila, and Totila, but under Frederick of Hohenstaufen and Luther, and having finally overcome them we may erect once more in Europe the Pax Romana and perhaps—who knows?—even the old unity of Christendom.

May, 1915.

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I

THE EMPIRE AND THE BARBARIANS

I

THE EMPIRE AND THE BARBARIANS

AT the opening of the fifth century of our era the Roman Empire had long been not only the civilised world but Christendom. The four centuries which had passed since the birth of Our Lord had seen in fact the foundation of Europe, not as we know it to-day a mosaic of hostile nationalities, but as one perfect whole in which all that is worth having in the world lay like a treasure. There were born and founded that they might always endure, the culture, the civilisation and the Faith which we enjoy and by which we live. There were established for ever the great lines upon which our art was to develop, to change and yet not to die. There was erected the supremacy of the idea that it might always renew our lives, our culture, and our polity, that we might always judge everything by it and fear neither revolution, nor defeat nor decay. There we Europeans were established in the secure possession of our own souls; so

that we alone in the world develop from within to change but never to die, and to be, alone in the world, Christians.

The outward and visible sign of the Empire, which above everything else distinguished it from the world which surrounded it, as an island is surrounded by an unmapped sea, was the Pax Romana. This was domestic as well as political. It ensured a complete and absolute order, the condition of civilisation, and, established through many generations, it seemed immutable and unbreakable. Along with it went a conception of law and of property more fundamental than anything we are now able to appreciate, while free exchange was assured by a complete system of communication and admirable roads. There is indeed scarcely anything that is really fundamental in our lives and in our politics that was not there created. It was there our religion, the soul of Europe, was born and little by little became the energy and the cause of all that undying but changeful principle of life and freedom which rightly understood is Europe. Our ideas of justice, our ideas of law, our conception of human dignity and the structure of our society were there conceived, and with such force that while we endure they

can never die. In truth, the Empire which it had taken more than a millennium to build was the most successful and perhaps the most beneficent experiment in universal government that has ever been made.

The Empire fell. Why?

We cannot answer that question. The causes of such a catastrophe, spiritual and material, are for the most part hidden from us in the darkness that followed the catastrophe, in which civilisation in the West all but perished. All we can do is to note that the administration of this great State became so expensive that when Alaric came over the Alps in 401 it was probably already bankrupt and in consequence the population was declining; and that the military problem before the Empire, the defence of its frontiers against the outer welter of barbarism, was so expensive and so naturally insecure that it was difficult to ensure and impossible with due economy. Finally we ought to be sure that though the Empire decayed and fell, it was not overthrown by the Barbarians. As in this book we are concerned not indeed with the Barbarian invasions as a whole but nevertheless with the most frightful and perhaps the most destructive among them, we shall do well to consider more

particularly here for a moment one of the causes of that fall, though not the chief one as we have said; the insecurity of the frontiers, namely, and the problem this proposed which the Empire was, alas, unable to solve.

The Empire was confined on the west by the ocean, on the south by the desert of Africa, on the east by the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf, on the north by the Rhine and the Danube, the Black Sea and the Caucasus.

It was that northern frontier which was a fundamental weakness and which at least from the middle of the third century continually occupied the mind of the Roman administration. How to hold it?

Beyond that frontier lay a world largely unknown, a mere wilderness of barbarians, tribes always restless, always at war, always pressing upon the confines of civilisation. Within lay all that is worth having in our lives, the hope of the world. It was this which, then as now, had to be defended and against the same enemy—barbarism. For barbarism does not become less barbarous when it becomes learned, a savage is a savage even in professorial dress. For this cause it is written: change your hearts and not your garments.

The defence, then, of the frontier had been

the chief problem of the Empire perhaps from its foundation by Augustus and certainly for two hundred years before Alaric crossed the Alps. Its solution was attempted in various ways, before, in the year 292, Diocletian attempted to deal with it by the revolutionary scheme of dividing the Empire. But the division he made was, and perhaps unavoidably, rather racial than strategic, the two parts of the Empire met at a critical point on the Danube and by force of geography the eastern part was inclined to an Asiatic outlook and to the neglect of the Danube, while the western was by no means strong enough to hold the tremendous line of the two rivers. Nevertheless the West made an heroic attempt to fulfil its too onerous duty. The capital of the vicariate of Italy was removed from Rome to Milan. This tremendous act was purely strategical. It was thought, and rightly, that the frontier would be more readily secured from Milan, which held, as it were, all the passes of the Alps in its hands, than from Rome in the midst of the long peninsula of Italy. It was a change more amazing than the removal of the capital of the British Empire from London to Edinburgh would be; but it was not enough. In 330, seventeen years after Chris-

tianity had become the official religion of the Empire, Constantine the Great for the same reasons of defence removed the seat of the Empire to Byzantium, the new Rome on the Bosphorus, which he renamed Constantinople.

That move, which has been so strongly condemned, would seem in any right apprehension of what followed to have saved what could be saved out of the foreseen and perhaps inevitable *débâcle*. Constantinople remained till 1453 the secure capital of the Eastern Government and of a Roman civilisation; it endured, and in more than one critical period held up the citadel of the West—Italy—in its hands.

It may be that nothing could have secured the West; that the foundation of Constantinople saved the East is certain. Because the West was the weaker and the richer, because the name of Rome was so tremendous, the West, as we know, bore the full brunt of the Barbarian assault. That assault was a much looser and more haphazard affair than we have been wont to believe. The West was rather engulfed than defeated. For a time it was lost in a sea of barbarism; that it emerged, that it rearose, and that we are what we are, we owe to the foundation of Constantinople and to the Catholic Church.

I say that the Empire was rather engulfed than defeated. Let us consider this.

In the year 375 the frontiers were secure; nevertheless before then the defence had failed. Long before then it had become obvious that the vast hordes of Barbarians beyond the Rhine and the Danube could not be held back if anything should occur to drive them on. If they came on they would have to be met, not beyond, or even upon the rivers, but within the Empire itself.

If anything should occur to drive them on. . . . In the year 375 this befell. Ammianus Marcellinus, the contemporary Roman historian, writing of the incursions of the Barbarians, asserts that all the evils which befell the Empire at that time were due to one people —the Huns. In the year 375 the Huns were finally victorious over the Goths who in 376 in utter despair appealed to the Eastern Emperor Valens for protection. "Suppliant multitudes of that warlike nation," we read of the Goths, "whose pride was now humbled in the dust, covered a space of many miles along the banks of the Danube. With outstretched arms and pathetic lamentations they loudly deplored their past misfortunes and their present danger; acknowledged that their only hope of safety

was in the clemency of the Roman Government; and most solemnly protested that if the gracious liberality of the Emperor would permit them to cultivate the waste lands of Thrace they would ever hold themselves bound by the strongest obligations of duty and gratitude to obey the laws and guard the tenets of the republic." Their prayers were granted and their service was accepted by the Imperial Government. They were transported over the Danube into the Roman Empire. In some ways this act and its date 376 are among the most momentous in the history of Europe.

Undisciplined and restless this nation of near a million Barbarians suddenly introduced into civilisation was a constant anxiety and danger. Ignorant of the laws they had sworn to keep, as well as of the obligations and privileges of civilisation, the Goths were at the mercy of their masters, who exploited them without scruple, till driven to madness they revolted and began the fatal march through Moesia, entering Thrace at last not as the guests of the Empire but as its victorious enemy. They encamped under the walls of Hadrianople which presently they besieged, laying waste the provinces; and it was not till Theodosius had ascended the Imperial throne

that they were successfully dealt with, forced to submit, and settled in Thrace and Asia Minor.

But such a result could not endure. The Barbarians but awaited a leader, and when he appeared, as he did in the person of Alaric, after the death of Theodosius, they turned on Constantinople itself, which they were able to approach but not to blockade. In 396 Alaric marched southward into Greece; from Thermopylae to Sparta he pursued his victorious way, avoiding Athens rather from superstition than from fear of any mortal foe. Early in 396, however, Stilicho, who was later to win such fame in the Italian campaign, set sail from Italy, met Alaric in Arcadia, turned him back and seemed about to compel his surrender in the prison of the Peloponnesus. In this, however, he was not successful. Alaric was able to cut his way out and by rapid marches to reach the Gulf of Corinth and to transport his troops, his captives and his spoil to the opposite shore. There he succeeded in negotiating a treaty with Constantinople whereby he entered its pay and was declared Master General of Eastern Illyricum. This befell in 399.

The intervention of Stilicho, successful

though it had been, had proved one thing before all others; the political separation of the East and the West. The sailing of Stilicho and his army was the intervention of the West to save the East, for it was the East that was then in danger. The West was betrayed. The East made terms with the Barbarian and employed him. It behoved the West to look to itself, for it was obvious that the East would save itself at last by sacrificing the West.

The West was ready. A scheme of defence had been prepared which, as we shall see, was the best that could in the circumstances have been devised. With a directness and a clarity worthy of Rome the advisers of Honorius, then in Milan, determined to sacrifice everything if need be to the defence of the European citadel, of Italy that is; and, after all, considering the position of Alaric in Illyricum, it was that which was chiefly threatened. If it fell it was certain that the whole of the West must collapse.

The problem before the advisers of Honorius was not an easy one. To solve it with certainty enormous sacrifices were necessary, but to solve it meant the salvation of the world. It was therefore determined to abandon the

Rhine and the Danube, for already Alaric was within those lines. It was determined—and this was the decisive thing—to abandon the Alps, to make, that is to say, Cisalpine Gaul, or as we say the Lombard Plain, the battle-field, and to hold Italy proper along the line of the Apennines. I have examined and explained this strategy at length elsewhere;[1] here it is only necessary to say that its amazing success justified a policy so realistic.

The theory of the commanders of Honorius was that the Apennines were by nature impregnable save at one place, the narrow pass between them and the Adriatic, which they had long designed Ravenna to hold. Their intention to hold this line was determined not only by this theory, but by this, too, that they were something more than uncertain of the attitude of the Eastern Empire. Their strategy meant the abandonment of the richest province south of the Alps, the richest and the most ancient; but if the military theory which regarded the Apennines as impassable were right it meant the certain and immediate salvation of the soul of the West and the eventual salvation of the whole.

Honorius and his ministers had not long to

[1] See my "Ravenna" (Dent, 1913), pp. 1–10).

wait. Having looted the provinces of Europe within the dominion of the Eastern Emperor, Alaric "tempted by the power, the beauty and the wealth of Italy . . . secretly aspired to plant the Gothic standard on the walls of Rome, and to enrich his army with the accumulated spoils of an hundred triumphs."

In November, 401, Alaric entered Venetia by the Julian Alps and passed by Aquileia without taking it, intent on the spoil of the South. As he came on Honorius retired from Milan to Ravenna; the gates of Italy were barred. Then came Stilicho over the Cisalpine Plain, met Alaric, who had crossed the Po, at Pollentia, and defeated him and, following his retreat, broke him at Asta so that he compelled him to recross the Alps. In 403 Alaric again entered Venetia. Stilicho met him at Verona and once more hurled him back. The barred gates of Italy had scarce been questioned.

It was not Alaric, after all, but another Barbarian, Radagaisus, who was first to demand an entrance. In 405 he traversed the same Alpine passes as Alaric had used, passed Aquileia, crossed the Po and shunning the Via Emilia, which led through the pass Ravenna barred, adventured over the Apen-

nines which the Roman generals had conceived as impassable by a Barbarian army. They were right. When Radagaisus saw the South he was starving. Stilicho found him at Fiesole and cut him to pieces. But the remnant of his army escaped as Alaric had done, it was not annihilated; it returned through Cisalpine Gaul and fell upon Gaul proper. Then in 408 Stilicho was murdered in Ravenna by order of the Emperor.

This last disaster was the cause of what immediately followed. When in 408 Alaric invaded Venetia he looted and destroyed as he wished, for there was no one to meet him. He took the great road southward and found the gate open; passed Ravenna without opposition, marched to Rome and after three sieges entered and pillaged it and was on his way southward to enjoy and to loot the South and Sicily, Placidia, the Emperor's sister, a captive in his train, when he died at Cosenza in 410. His brother-in-law Adolphus, erected as king upon the shields of the Goths—there by the monstrous grave of his predecessor—concluded a peace with Honorius similar to that which years before Alaric had made with Constantinople. He was received into the Imperial service, consented to cross the Alps,

and, what was to become a precedent for a yet more outrageous demand, received the hand of Placidia, the Emperor's sister, in marriage. Thus the retreat of the Barbarian was secured, the peace of Italy restored and a repose obtained which endured for some forty-two years.

It is interesting to observe the extraordinary likeness between Alaric's attack upon the East and his invasion of the West. Indeed, the only difference between them is the fact that Constantinople was never really in danger, whereas Rome was entered and looted. The intention of both invasions was the same—loot; the result of both was the same—tribute and service in return for the evacuation of the immediate provinces by the Barbarian.

The Imperial failure East and West was a failure in morale and in politics; it was not rightly understood a military failure: Alaric had always been defeated when he was attacked. It was the failure of the West to attack him that gave him Rome at last. The Imperial advisers perhaps thought they had solved the question he had propounded to them, when, after Alaric's death, they had obtained the retreat of the Barbarian across the Alps—a retreat he was as glad to carry out as they to order,

for he was in a sort of trap—and had secured at least his neutrality by admitting him into the service of the Empire. But the peace of more than a generation which followed their act was as illusory as it was contemptible.

The whole Empire had received from Alaric a moral blow from which it was never really to recover. It is true that much which happened in the years that immediately followed the retreat of Adolphus was fortunate. Placidia the spoil and the bride and later the fugitive widow of Alaric's successor returned in triumph to Ravenna to be the unwilling bride of her deliverer Constantius. Largely through her influence, after the death of Honorius, when she ruled in Ravenna with the title of Augusta as the guardian of her son, the young Cæsar Valentinian, between East and West, a new, if unsubstantial, cordiality appeared. Italy at least was restored to prosperity, while in Aetius she possessed a general as great as the great Stilicho. But if Italy was safe the provinces were in peril and she herself saw Africa betrayed by Boniface and ravaged by and lost to the Vandals under Genseric. Nor was the domestic state of her household and court such as to inspire her with confidence in the future. If her son

Valentinian was a foolish and sensual boy, her daughter Honoria was discovered in a low intrigue with a chamberlain of the palace, and when in exile at Constantinople sent, perhaps longing for the romantic fate of her mother, her ring to the new and youthful King of the Huns, soon to be famous as Attila, inviting him to carry her off as Adolphus, the Goth, had carried off Placidia.

Such was the condition of things in the royal household of the West. In Constantinople things were not more promising. Theodosius, the young Emperor, called the Calligrapher, was a dilettante of the fine arts, not a statesman. Those who surrounded him were mediocrities intent rather on theological controversies than on the safety of the State, or sunk in a cynical corruption in which everything noble was lost. No one East or West seemed able to grasp or to realise that there was any danger. Had the Imperial Governments failed altogether to understand the fundamental cause of the Gothic advance, the Vandal attack, indeed of all their embarrassments? Had they failed to remember what was there beyond the Rhine and the Danube? Had they forgotten the Huns?

II

THE HUNS AND ATTILA

II

THE HUNS AND ATTILA

THE people called the Huns, "scarcely mentioned in other records," are fully described by that Ammianus Marcellinus[1] whom I have already quoted. He lived at the end of the fourth century, was a Roman historian born of Greek parents at Antioch, and after fighting in Gaul, in Germany and the East, settled in Rome and devoted himself to history. He describes the Huns as "living beyond the Sea of Azov on the borders of the Frozen Ocean." And adds that they were a people "savage beyond all parallel." He then gives us the following careful description of them :—

"In their earliest infancy deep incisions are made in the cheeks of their boys[2] so that when the time comes for the beard to grow the sprouting hairs may be kept back by the

[1] In the thirty-first book of his History of Rome: see Appendix I.

[2] The Prussian student is even to-day famous for the scars on his face inflicted in the duels at the Universities.

furrowed scars, and therefore they grow to old age as beardless as eunuchs. At the same time all have strong and well-built limbs and strong necks; they are indeed of great size, but so short-legged that you might fancy them to be two-legged beasts, or the figures which are hewn out in a rude manner with an axe on the posts at the end of bridges.[1]

"They do, however, just bear the likeness of men (horribly ugly though they be), but they are so little advanced in civilisation that they make no use of fire, nor of seasoned food, but live on roots which they find in the fields, or on the half raw flesh of any animal which they merely warm a little by placing it between their own thighs and the backs of their horses.

"They do not live under roofed houses but look upon them as tombs and will only enter them of necessity. Nor is there to be found among them so much as a cabin thatched with reed; but they wander about over the mountains and through the woods training themselves to bear from their infancy the extremes of frost and hunger and thirst.

"They wear linen clothes or else the skins

[1] Cf. the physique of the ordinary Prussian at its most characteristic in Von Hindenberg, who really seems to have been hewn out of wood.

of field mice sewn together, and this both at home and abroad. When once such a tunic is put on, it is never changed till from long decay it falls to pieces. Their heads are covered with round caps and their hairy legs with goat skins and their shoes which are ignorant of any last are so clumsy as to hinder them in walking.

"For this cause they are not well suited for infantry; but, on the other hand, they are almost one with their horses, which are poorly shaped but hardy; often they sit them like women. In truth they can remain on horseback night and day; on horseback they buy and sell, they eat and drink, and bowed on the narrow neck of their steeds they even sleep and dream. On horseback too they discuss and deliberate. They are not, however, under the authority of a king, but are content with the loose government of their chiefs.

"When attacked they sometimes engage in regular battle formed in a solid body and uttering all kinds of terrific yells. More often, however, they fight irregularly, suddenly dispersing, then reuniting and after inflicting huge loss upon their enemy will scatter over the plains hither and thither, avoiding a

fortified place or an entrenchment. It must be confessed that they are very formidable warriors. . . .

"None of them ploughs or even touches a plough-handle; for they have no settled abode, but are alike homeless and lawless, continually wandering with their waggons which indeed are their homes. They seem to be ever in flight. . . . Nor if he is asked can any one tell you where he was born; for he was conceived in one place, born in another far away, and bred in another still more remote.

"They are treacherous and inconstant and like brute beasts are utterly ignorant of the distinction between right and wrong. They only express themselves with difficulty and ambiguously, have no respect for any religion or superstition, are immoderately covetous of gold, and are so fickle and cantankerous that many times in a day they will quarrel with their comrades without cause and be reconciled without satisfaction." [1]

Such were the people who according to Ammianus were "the original cause of all

[1] It was a modern and famous German who not long since declared that the Prussians were such quarrelsome and disagreeable brutes that it was only their propensity to drink beer and that continually that mollified them sufficiently to be regarded as human beings.

the destruction and manifold calamities" which descended upon the Roman Empire, in the fifth century of our era.

Fifty-six years before they began directly to menace civilisation and the Roman Empire, they had, as we have seen, in 376 A.D., driven the Goths before them to the first of those famous assaults upon the frontiers of the Roman world. They themselves, utter barbarians as they were, attempted then no direct attack upon our civilisation, though in 396 they crossed the Caucasus, raided Armenia and as Claudius notes, "laid waste the pleasant fields of Syria." In 409, however, Alaric being then intent on Italy, they crossed the Danube and pushed on into Bulgaria, Uldis, their chief, boasting in true Barbarian fashion, "All that the sun shines upon I can conquer if I will." It was the first claim of the Barbarian, vocal and explicit, to "a place in the sun"—someone else's place. Uldis' boast, however, had been but the prelude to his flight and fall. Amid the welter of Barbarians less barbarous than he, Visigoths, Vandals, Suevi, Alani, the Hun in fact was unable to do much more than drive them on. When they had passed into the Empire, into Gaul and Spain and Africa, he, worse than them all, was free at last to

threaten Christendom and its capitals, Constantinople and Rome.

It was not till the two brothers Attila and Bleda ascended the Hunnish throne, if throne it can be called, in the year 423, that the Huns really became immediately and directly dangerous to civilisation.

That civilisation already half bankrupt and in transition had, as we have seen, been bewildered and wounded by the actual incursion of Barbarian armies south of the Danube and the Rhine, nay within the heart of the Empire, within reach of Constantinople, within the very walls of Rome. It was now to be assaulted by a savage horde, wholly heathen, intent on murder and rape, loot and destruction.

The contrast between the two attacks, the attack of Alaric and that of Attila, is very striking. To admire Alaric, even to defend him, is obviously not impossible, since so many historians have been found ready to do both. No voice unless it be Kaiser Wilhelm's has ever been raised in behalf of Attila. Here was the Empire, Christendom; he fell upon it like a wild beast. At least the Goths were Christian—though Arian—the Huns were pagan heathen. At least Alaric

had revered the Roman name and sought to assume it; Attila despised and hated it and would have destroyed it utterly. But if there is this moral contrast between the Gothic and the Hunnish attacks upon the Empire, militarily they are alike in this above all that both were directed first upon the East and were only turned upon the West after a sort of failure. Happily for us the attacks of Attila, while infinitely more damaging, were not nearly so dangerous as those of Alaric. The Empire was assaulted by an assassin; it was delivered.

The Roman system with regard to the Barbarians had long been established when Theodosius II ascended the Eastern throne. It consisted not only in employing Barbarians as auxiliaries—thus Uldis and his Huns had fought under Stilicho against Radagaisus at the battle of Fiesole; but in setting the different Barbarian tribes and races one against another. The Huns especially had been favoured by the Empire in this way, Stilicho knew them well and Aetius who was at last to defeat them upon the Catalaunian plains owed them perhaps his life in the crisis that followed the death of his rival Boniface in 433. But that policy, always dangerous, and the more so if it were inevitable, was already

bankrupt. The dispersal through the provinces of the Goths, the Vandals, the Alani, Suevi and other tribes left the Empire face to face upon its northern frontier with the real force which had driven them on. In 432 we find Roua, King of the Huns, in receipt of an annual subsidy, scarcely to be distinguished from a tribute, of 350 pounds' weight of gold. He it was who perhaps first broke the old Roman policy. When the Empire, according to its custom, made alliances with certain Barbarian tribes his neighbours, he claimed them as his subjects and immediately swore that he would denounce all his treaties with the Empire unless the Emperor broke off these alliances. Moreover, he demanded that all those of his subjects then within the Empire should be restored to him; for many had entered the Roman service to escape his harsh rule. These demands could not be ignored or refused. In 433 Theodosius was on the point of sending an embassy to treat with Roua, when he heard that he was dead and that his two nephews, still young men, Attila and Bleda, had succeeded him. It was they who received the Imperial ambassadors.

The conference met on the right bank of the Danube within the Empire, that is near the

Roman town of Margus or Margum, a city of Moesia, where the Danube and the Morava meet. The place was known as the *Margum planum* on account of the character of the country, and was famous as the spot where Diocletian had defeated Carinus.[1]

The Byzantine historian Priscus has left us an account of this strange meeting. The Huns it seems came on horseback and as they refused to dismount the Roman ambassadors also remained on their horses. It was thus they heard the arrogant demands of the Hunnish kings: the denunciation by Theodosius of his alliance with the Barbarians of the Danube, the expulsion of all the Huns serving in the Imperial armies or settled within the Empire, an undertaking not to assist any Barbarian people at war with the Huns, and the payment by the Empire as tribute, *tributi nomine*, of seven hundred pounds' weight of gold instead of the three hundred and fifty given hitherto. To all these demands the ambassadors were forced to agree as Attila insisted either upon their acceptance or upon war, and Theodosius preferred any humiliation to war. The famous

[1] It is curious to remember that this first encounter of Attila with the Imperial power took place in what is now Servia only fifty miles further down the Danube than Belgrade.

conference of Margus was thus a complete victory for the Huns, a victory Attila never forgot.

That Theodosius was ready to accept any terms which Attila might insist upon is proved by the fact that he immediately delivered up to him his two guests, young princes of the Huns, and made no protest when Attila crucified them before the eyes of his ambassadors.

This act seems to symbolise at the outset the character of Attila and his reign. He was then, we may suppose, between thirty and forty years old, and although the younger always the master of his brother Bleda, whom he was soon to murder. Of the place of his birth we know nothing,[1] but he grew up on the Danube and there learned the use of arms, perhaps in the company of the young Aetius, who had been a Roman hostage of Roua and who was one day to conquer Attila. If we look for a portrait of him we shall unhappily not find it in any contemporary writer; but Jornandes, probably repeating a lost passage of some earlier writer, perhaps Priscus himself, tells us that he was short, with a mighty

[1] It has been suggested that his name Attila is that of the Volga in the fifth century and that therefore he was born upon its banks; but as well might one say that Roua was born there because one of the ancient names of that river was Rha.

chest, a large head, eyes little and deep-set, a scant beard, flat nose and dark complexion. He thrust his head forward as he went and darted his glances all about, going proudly withal, like one destined to terrify the nations and shake the earth. Hasty and quarrelsome, his words, like his acts, were sudden and brutal, but though in war he only destroyed, and left the dead unburied in their thousands for a warning; to those who submitted to him he was merciful, or at least he spared them. He dressed simply and cleanly, ate as simply as he dressed, his food being served on wooden dishes; indeed his personal temperance contrasted with the barbaric extravagance he had about him. Nevertheless he was a Barbarian with the instincts of a savage. Constantly drunk he devoured women with a ferocious passion, every day having its victim, and his bastards formed indeed a people. He knew no religion but surrounded himself with sorcerers, for he was intensely superstitious.[1] As a general he was seldom in the field, he commanded rather than led and ever preferred diplomacy to battle.[2] His greatest

[1] For all this see Appendix: Jornandes, *R. Get.*, 35 and especially for his dress and food, Priscus, *infra.*

[2] Cf. Jorn., *R. Get.*, 36: "Homo subtilis antequam arma gereret, arte pugnabat. . . ."

weapon was prevarication. He would debate a matter for years and the continual embassies of Theodosius amused without exhausting him and his patience. He played with his victims as a cat does with a mouse and would always rather buy a victory than win it. He found his threat more potent than his deed, and in fact played with the Empire which had so much to lose, very much as Bismarck played with Europe. Like Bismarck too his business was the creation of an Empire. His idea, an idea that perhaps even Roua had not failed to understand, was the creation of an Empire of the North, a Hunnish Empire, in counterpoise against the Roman Empire of the South, to the south that is of the Rhine and the Danube. For this cause he wished to unite the various Barbarian tribes and nations under his sceptre, as Bismarck wished to unite the tribes of the Germans under the Prussian sword. He was to be the Emperor of the North as the Roman Emperors were Emperors of the South. Had he lived in our day he would have understood that famous telegram of the Kaiser to the Tsar of Russia—"the Admiral of the Atlantic . . ."

It was the business of Theodosius to prevent the realisation of this scheme, nor did he hesitate to break the treaty of Margus to achieve

this. His emissaries attempted to attach to the Empire the Acatziri, a Hunnish tribe that had replaced the Alani on the Don. Their chief, however, fearing for his independence, or stupidly handled, sent word to Attila of the Roman plot. The Hun came down at the head of a great army, and though he spared the Acatziri, for their chief was both wily and a flatterer, he brought all the Barbarians of that part within his suzerainty and, returning, soon found himself master of an Empire which stretched from the North Sea to the Caucasus, and from the Baltic to the Danube and the Rhine, an Empire certainly in extent comparable with that of Rome.

It was in achieving this truly mighty purpose that Attila exhibits two of his chief characteristics, his superstition and his cruelty.

It seems that the ancient Scythians on the plain to the east of the Carpathians had for idol and perhaps for God a naked sword, its hilt buried in the earth, its blade pointed skyward. To this relic the Romans had given the name of the sword of Mars. In the course of ages the thing had been utterly forgotten, till a Hunnish peasant seeing his mule go lame, and finding it wounded in the foot, on seeking for the cause, guided by the blood,

found this sword amid the undergrowth and brought it to Attila who recovered it joyfully as a gift from heaven and a sign of his destined sovereignty over all the peoples of the earth. So at least Jornandes relates.[1]

The other episode exhibits his cruelty. In founding his empire Attila had certainly made many enemies and aroused the jealousy of those of his own house. At any rate he could not remember without impatience that he shared his royalty with Bleda. To one of his subtlety such impatience was never without a remedy. Bleda was accused of treason, perhaps of plotting with Theodosius, and Attila slew his brother or had him assassinated; and alone turned to enjoy his Barbary and to face Rome.

[1] See Appendix, Jornandes, *R. Get.*, 35.

III

ATTILA AND THE EASTERN EMPIRE

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WHEN Attila had achieved the hegemony of the North he turned his attention upon the Empire; and it is curious for us at this moment to note the coincidence that this first attack upon civilisation was delivered at the very spot upon the Danube where the Germanic powers in August, 1914, began their offensive. Attila directed his armies upon the frontiers of modern Servia at the point where the Save joins the Danube, where the city of Singidunum rose then and where to-day Belgrade stands.

The pretext for this assault was almost as artificial and manufactured as that which Austria put forward for her attack upon Servia. Attila asserted that the Bishop of that same frontier town of Margus, on the Morava, where he had made treaty with the Empire, had crossed the Danube, and having secretly obtained access to the sepulchre of the Hunnish kings had stolen away its trea-

sures. The Bishop, of course, eagerly denied this strange accusation, and it seemed indeed so unlikely that he was guilty that Theodosius was exceedingly reluctant to sacrifice him. The people of Moesia clamoured for a decision; if the Bishop were guilty then he must be delivered to Attila, but if not Theodosius must protect both him and them. For Attila had waited for nothing; he had crossed the Danube before making his accusation and had occupied Viminacium, one of the greater towns upon the frontier.

Meanwhile the Bishop, seeing the hesitation of Theodosius and expecting to be sacrificed, made his way to the camp of the Huns and promised in return for his life to deliver Margus to them, and this he did upon the following night. Then, dividing his forces into two armies, Attila began his real attack upon the Empire.

The first of these armies was directed upon Singidunum, the modern Belgrade, which was taken and ruined, and when that was achieved it proceeded up the Save to Sirmium, the ancient capital of Pannonia, which soon fell into its hands. The second crossed the Danube further eastward and besieged Ratiaria, a considerable town, the head-quarters of a

THE ATTACK OF ATTILA UPON THE EAST.

Roman Legion and the station of the fleet of the Danube.

Having thus, with this second army, secured the flank, Attila marched his first army from Singidunum up the Morava to Naissus (Nisch), precisely as the Austrians tried to do but yesterday. They failed, but he succeeded and Naissus fell. Thence he passed on to Sardica where he was met by his second army which had taken Ratiaria. Sardica was pillaged and burnt.

Attila thus possessed himself in the year 441 of the gateways of the Balkans, almost without a protest from Theodosius. Five years later, in 446, he was ready to advance again. In that year and the next he destroyed two Roman armies, took and pillaged some seventy towns, and pushed south as far as Thermopylae, and eastward even to Gallipoli; only the walls of Constantinople saved the capital. Theodosius was forced to buy a disgraceful peace at the price of an immediate payment of 6000 pounds' weight of gold, an annual tribute, no longer even disguised, of 2000 pounds, and an undertaking that the Empire would never employ or give refuge to any of those whom Attila claimed as his subjects.

It was easier to agree to such terms than

to fulfil them. The provinces were ruined, the whole fiscal system of the East in confusion, and even what wealth remained was, as Priscus tells us, "spent not in national purposes, but on absurd shows and gaudy pageants, and all the pleasures and excesses of a licentious society such as would not have been permitted in any properly governed State, even in the midst of the greatest prosperity." Attila, who marked the decay and the embarrassment of the Imperial Government, forewent nothing of his advantage. He became more and more rapacious. When he did not obtain all he desired he sent an embassy to Constantinople to intimidate the government, and this became a regular means of blackmail with him, a means more humiliating than war and not less successful.

The first of these embassies arrived in Constantinople immediately after the terms of peace had been agreed upon. It made further demands, and was treated with the most extravagant hospitality. Three times within a single year other embassies arrived; they were a means of blackmail and were assured of an ever-increasing success.

The most famous and the most important of these embassies was that which arrived in

Constantinople in 449. The ambassadors then employed by Attila are worthy of notice, for in them we see not only the condition of things at that time, but also the naive cunning of the Hun. The two chief legates whom Attila dispatched to Constantinople upon this occasion were Edecon and Orestes. Edecon was a Scythian or Hun by birth, a heathen of course, and a Barbarian, the commander of the guard of Attila, and the father of Odoacer, later to be so famous. Orestes, on the other hand, who was one of Attila's chief ministers, was a Roman provincial of Pannonia, born at Petavium (probably Pettau on the Drave), who had made a fortunate marriage as a young man when he allied himself with Romulus, a considerable Roman personage of that province. He had, however, deserted the Imperial service, certainly open to him, for that of the Barbarians, and had made his fortune. Nor was his part in history to be played out in the service of Attila, for his son Romulus was to be the last of the Western Emperors, contemptuously known to history as Romulus Augustulus.

Orestes was then an adventurer pure and simple, but in sending him with the Barbarian Edecon, we see the system of Attila in his

blackmail of the Empire. The employment of a Roman provincial was a check upon the Barbarian envoy. A bitter jealousy subsisted between them, each spied on the other, and thus Attila was well served. The fact that the Hun was able to command the services of such as Orestes is a sufficient comment upon the condition of the frontier provinces.

It was these two jealous envoys that, in the early months of 449, appeared in Constantinople bringing, of course, new demands. Their mission, indeed, was the most insolent that Attila had so far dared to send. It demanded three main things; first, that all the country to the south of the Danube as far as Naissus should be regarded as a part of the Hunnish Empire; second, that in future Theodosius should send to the Hunnish court only the most illustrious ambassadors, but if this were done Attila for his part would consent to meet them on the frontier at Sardica; third, that the refugees should be delivered up. This last demand was a repetition of many that had gone before it. As before Attila threatened if his requests were not granted he would make war.

The ambassadors Edecon and Orestes came to Constantinople where a "Roman" named Vigilas acted as their guide and interpreter, an

indiscreet and vulgar fellow of whom we shall hear more presently. Received in audience by Theodosius in the famous palace on the Bosphorus, the ambassadors with the interpreter later visited the chief minister, the eunuch Chrysaphius. On their way they passed through the noble halls of Constantine decorated with gold and built of marble, the whole a vast palace, perhaps as great as the Vatican. Edecon, the Hun, was stupefied by so much splendour, he could not forbear to express his amazement; Vigilas was not slow to mark this naïve astonishment nor to describe it to Chrysaphius, who presently proposed to put it to good use. Taking Edecon apart from Orestes as he talked he suggested to him that he also might enjoy such splendour if he would leave the Huns and enter the service of the Emperor. After all it was not more than Orestes had done. But Edecon answered that it would be despicable to leave one's master without his consent. Chrysaphius then asked what position he held at the court of Attila, and if he was so much in the confidence of his master as to have access freely to him. To which Edecon answered that he approached him when he would, that he was indeed the chief of his captains and

kept watch over his person by night. And when Chrysaphius heard this he was content and told Edecon that if he were capable of discretion he would show him a way to grow rich without trouble, but that he must speak with him more at leisure, which he would do presently if he would come and sup with him that evening alone without Orestes or any following. Already in the mind of the eunuch a plan was forming by which he hoped to rid the Empire once for all of the formidable Hun.

Edecon accepted the invitation. Awaiting him he found Vigilas with Chrysaphius, and after supper heard apparently without astonishment the following amazing proposal. After swearing him to secrecy, Chrysaphius explained that he proposed to him the assassination of Attila. "If you but succeed in this and gain our frontiers," said he, "there will be no limit to our gratitude, you shall be loaded with honours and riches."

The Hun was ready in appearance at least to agree, but he insisted that he would need money for bribery, not much, but at least fifty pounds' weight of gold. This he explained he could not carry back with him as Attila was wont upon the return of his ambassadors to exact a most strict account

of the presents they had received, and so great a weight of gold could not escape the notice of his own companion and servants. He suggested then that Vigilas should accompany him home under the pretext of returning the fugitives and that at the right moment he should find the money necessary for the project. Needless to say, Chrysaphius readily agreed to all that Edecon proposed. He does not seem either to have been ashamed to make so Hunnish a proposal or to have suspected for a moment that Edecon was deceiving him. He laid all before Theodosius, won his consent and the approval of Martial his minister.

Together they decided to send an embassy to Attila, to which the better to mask their intentions Vigilas should be attached as interpreter. This embassy they proposed to make as imposing as possible, and to this end they appointed as its chief a man of a high, but not of consular rank, and of the best reputation. In this they showed a certain ability, for as it seemed to them if their plot failed they could escape suspicion by means of the reputation of their ambassador. The man they chose was called Maximin, and he fortunately chose as his secretary Priscus, the Sophist, to whose pen we are indebted for an account

of all these things. He asserts, and probably with truth, that neither Maximin nor he himself was aware of the plot of assassination. They conceived themselves to be engaged in a serious mission and were the more impressed by its importance in that its terms were far less subservient to the Hun than had been the custom in recent times. Attila was told that henceforth he must not evade the obligations of his treaties nor invade at all the Imperial territories. And with regard to the fugitives he was informed that beside those already surrendered seventeen were now sent but that there were no more. So ran the letter. But Maximin was also to say that the Hun must look for no ambassador of higher rank than himself since it was not the Imperial custom towards the Barbarians; on the contrary, Rome was used to send to the North any soldier or messenger who happened to be available. And since he had now destroyed Sardica his proposal to meet there any ambassador of consular rank was merely insolent. If indeed the Hun wished to remove the differences between Theodosius and himself he should send Onegesius as ambassador. Onegesius was the chief minister of Attila.

Such were the two missions, the one official,

the other secret, which set out together from Constantinople.

The great journey seems to have been almost wholly uneventful as far as Sardica, 350 miles from Constantinople, which was reached after a fortnight of travel. They found that town terribly pillaged but not destroyed, and the Imperial embassy bought sheep and oxen, and having prepared dinner invited Edecon and his colleagues to share it with them, for they were still officially within the Empire. But within those ruins, even among the ambassadors, peace was impossible. Priscus records the ridiculous quarrel which followed. The Huns began to magnify the power of Attila,—was not his work around them? The Romans knowing the contents of the letter they bore sang the praises of the Emperor. Suddenly Vigilas, perhaps already drunk, asserted that it was not right to compare men with the gods, nor Attila with Theodosius, since Attila was but a man. Only the intervention of Maximin and Priscus prevented bloodshed, nor was harmony restored till Orestes and Edecon had received presents of silk and jewels. Even these gifts were not made altogether without an untoward incident. For Orestes in thanking

Maximin exclaimed that he, Maximin, was not like those insolent courtiers of Constantinople "who gave presents and invitations to Edecon, but none to me." And when Maximin, ignorant of the Chrysaphian plot, demanded explanations, Orestes angrily left him. Already the plan of assassination was beginning to fester.

The ambassadors went on from ruined Sardica to desolate Naissus (Nisch) utterly devoid of inhabitants, full only of horror and ruins. They crossed a plain sown with human bones whitening in the sun, and saw the only witness to the Hunnish massacre of the inhabitants—a vast cemetery. "We found," Priscus tells us, "a clean place above the river where we camped and slept."

Close to this ruined town was the Imperial army, commanded by Agintheus, under whose eagles five of the seventeen refugees to be surrendered had taken refuge. The Roman general, however, was obliged to give them up. Their terror as they went on in the ambassadorial train towards the Danube may well be imagined.

The great river at length came in sight; its approaches lined and crowded with Huns, the passages served by the Barbarians in dug-outs, boats formed out of the hollowed trunks of trees. With these boats the whole Barbarian

shore was littered as though in readiness for the advance of an army. Indeed, as it appeared Attila was in camp close by, and intent on hunting within the Roman confines to the south of the river, a means certainly of reconnaissance as habitually used by the Huns as commerce has been for the same end by the Germans.

We do not know with what feelings Maximin and Priscus saw all this and crossed the great river frontier at last and passed into Barbary. To their great chagrin, for they had made the way easy for the Hunnish ambassadors on the road through the Imperial provinces, Edecon and Orestes now left them brusquely enough. For several days they went on alone but for the guides Edecon had left them, till one afternoon they were met by two horsemen who informed them that they were close to the camp of Attila who awaited them. And indeed upon the morrow they beheld from a hill-top the Barbarian tents spread out innumerable at their feet, and among them that of the King. They decided to camp there on the hill; but a troop of Huns at once rode up and ordered them to establish themselves in the plain. "What," cried they, "will you dare to pitch your tents on the heights when that of Attila is below?"

They were scarce established in their appointed place when to their amazement Edecon and Orestes and others appeared and asked their business, the object of their embassy. The astonished ambassadors looked at one another in amaze. When the question was repeated Maximin announced that he could not disclose his mission to any other than Attila to whom he was accredited. Scotta, the brother of Onegesius, then announced angrily that Attila had sent them and they must have an answer. When Maximin again refused the Huns galloped away.

The Romans, however, were not left long in doubt of the reception they were to get. Scotta and his friends soon returned without Edecon, and to the further amazement of Maximin repeated word for word the contents of the Imperial letter to Attila. "Such," said they, "is your commission. If this be all depart at once." Maximin protested in vain. Nothing remained but to prepare for departure. Vigilas who knew what Chrysaphius expected was particularly furious; better have lied than to return without achieving anything, said he. What to do? It was already night. They were in the midst of Barbary, between them and the Danube lay leagues of wild unfriendly

country. Suddenly as their servants loaded the beasts for their miserable journey other messengers arrived from the Hun. They might remain in their camp till dawn. In that uneasy night, had Vigilas been less of a fool, he must have guessed that Edecon had betrayed him.

It was not the barbarous Vigilas, however, who found a way out of the difficulty, for at dawn the command to depart was repeated, but that Priscus who has left us so vivid an account of this miserable affair. He it was who, seeing the disgrace of his patron, sought out Scotta, the brother of Onegesius, the chief minister of Attila, in the Hunnish camp. With him went Vigilas as interpreter, and so cleverly did the Sophist work upon the ambition of Scotta, pointing out to him not only the advantages of peace between the Huns and the Romans, but also the personal advantage Scotta would gain thereby in honour and presents, and at last feigning to doubt Scotta's ability to achieve even so small a matter as the reception of the embassy that he had his way. Scotta rode off to see Attila, Priscus returned to his patron, and soon after Scotta returned to escort them to the royal tent.

The reception must have been a strange

spectacle. The tent of Attila was quite surrounded by a multitude of guards; within, upon a stool of wood, was seated the great Hun. Priscus, Vigilas and the servants who attended them bearing the presents remained upon the threshold. Maximin alone went forward and gave into Attila's hands the letter of Theodosius saying: "The Emperor wishes Attila and all that are his health and length of days." "May the Romans receive all they desire for me," replied the instructed Barbarian. And turning angrily to Vigilas he said: "Shameless beast, why hast thou dared to come hither knowing as thou dost the terms of peace I made with thee and Anatolius. Did I not then tell thee that I would receive no more ambassadors till all the refugees had been surrendered!" Vigilas replied that they brought seventeen fugitives with them and that now there remained no more within the Empire. This only made Attila more furious: "I would crucify thee and give thee as food for the vultures but for the laws regarding envoys," cried he. As for the refugees, he declared there were many still within the Empire, and bade his people read out their names, and this done he told Vigilas to depart with Eslas, one of his officers, to inform Theodosius that he

must forthwith return all the fugitives who had entered the Empire from the time of Carpilio, son of Aetius, who had been his hostage. "I will never suffer," said he, "that my slaves shall bear arms against me, useless though they be to aid those with whom they have found refuge. . . . What city or what fortress have they been able to defend when I have determined to take it?" When he had said these words he grew calmer; informed Maximin that the order of departure only concerned Vigilas, and prayed the ambassador to remain and await the reply to the letter of the Emperor. The audience closed with the presentation and acceptance of the Roman presents.

Vigilas must surely have guessed now what his dismissal meant. Perhaps, however, he was too conceited and too stupid to notice it. At any rate he did not enlighten his companions but professed himself stupefied by the change of Attila's demeanour towards him. The whole affair was eagerly discussed in the Roman camp. Priscus suggested that Vigilas' unfortunate indiscretion at Sardica had been reported to Attila and had enraged him. Maximin did not know what to think. While they were still debating Edecon appeared and

took Vigilas apart. The Hun may well have thought he needed reassurance. He declared that he was still true to the plan of Chrysaphius. Moreover, seeing what a fool Vigilas was, he told him that his dismissal was a contrivance of his own to enable the interpreter to return to Constantinople and fetch the money promised, which could be introduced as necessary to the embassy for the purchase of goods. Vigilas, however, can scarcely have believed him, at any rate for long; a few hours later Attila sent word that none of the Romans were to be allowed to buy anything but the bare necessities of life from the Huns, neither horses, nor other beasts, nor slaves, nor to redeem captives. Vigilas departed with the order ringing in his ears, upon a mission he must have known to be hopeless.

Two days later Attila broke camp and set out for his capital, the Roman ambassadors following in his train under the direction of guides appointed by the Hun. They had not gone far on their way northward when they were directed to leave the train of Attila and to follow another route, because, they were told, the King was about to add one more to his innumerable wives, Escam, the daughter of a chief in a neighbouring village.

Very curious is Priscus' description of the way followed by the patron and his embassy. They journeyed across the Hungarian plain, across horrible marshes and lakes which had to be traversed sometimes on rafts; they crossed three great rivers, the Drave, the Temes, and the Theiss in dug-outs, boats such as they had seen on the Danube hollowed out of the trunks of trees. They lived for the most part on millet which their guides brought or took from the wretched inhabitants, they drank mead and beer, and were utterly at the mercy of the weather, which was extremely bad. On one occasion, indeed, their camp was entirely destroyed by tempest, and had it not been for the hospitality of the widow of Bleda they would perhaps have perished.

For seven days they made their way into the heart of Hungary till they came to a village where their way joined the greater route by which Attila was coming. There they were forced to await the King, since they must follow and not precede him. It was in this place that they met another Roman embassy, that of the Emperor in the West, Valentinian III, who was quarrelling with Attila about the holy vessels of Sirmium. It seems that the Bishop of Sirmium in 441,

seeing his city invested, had gathered his chalices and patens and plate, sacred vessels of his church, and had sent them secretly to a certain Constantius, a Gaul, at that time Attila's minister. In case the city fell they were to be used as ransom, first of the Bishop, and in case of his death of any other captives. Constantius was, however, untrue to the trust placed in him by the Bishop, and sold or pawned the plate to a silversmith in Rome. Attila hearing of it when Constantius was beyond his reach claimed the booty as his own. It was upon this miserable business that Valentinian had sent an embassy to Attila from Ravenna.

It is certainly a shameful and an amazing spectacle we have here. In that little village of Barbary the ambassadors of the Emperors, East and West, of the Courts of Constantinople and Ravenna, of New Rome and of Old, wait in a marsh the passage of a savage that they may be allowed to follow in his train and humbly seek an audience. Surely Attila himself had arranged that meeting, and as he rode on to his capital, the two embassies following in his dust, he must have enjoyed the outrageous insult to civilisation, the triumph of brute force over law.

IV

THE IMPERIAL EMBASSY AT THE COURT OF ATTILA

IV

THE IMPERIAL EMBASSY AT THE COURT OF ATTILA

THE entry of Attila into his capital was witnessed by Priscus and has been recorded by him with much naive care, for it evidently excited his curiosity and interest. The Hun was met by a procession of maidens who passed in groups of seven under long veils of white linen, upheld by the matrons on either side of the way, singing as they passed Scythian songs. So they went on towards the palace past the house of the chief minister Onegesius, where the wife of the favourite, surrounded by her servants and slaves, awaited the King to present him with a cup filled with wine, which he graciously consented to receive at her hands. Four huge Huns lifted up a tray of silver loaded with viands that the King might eat also, which he did without alighting from his horse. Then he passed on to his own house. Maximin pitched his camp, it seems,

between the house of Onegesius and the palace of the King.

This palace, built on an eminence, commanded the whole town or village, and was remarkable on account of its high towers. It seems to have consisted of a vast circular enclosure within which were many houses, that of the King and those of his wives and children. All was of wood, both enclosures and houses, but admirably built and polished and ornamented with carving. The harem was of a lighter construction from the palace and had no towers, but was on all sides ornamented with carvings. Not far away from the royal enclosure stood the house of Onegesius, similarly constructed but not so large and fine. But here the minister, a remarkable personage, had constructed, and that in stone, a bath on the Roman model. It seems that in the sack of Sirmium an architect had been taken captive. Now Onegesius forced him to build in the manner of the Romans a complete *balnea,* and this the captive did as speedily as possible hoping for his freedom. Stone was brought from Pannonia and all was contrived and finished; but when the builder claimed his liberty, Onegesius, seeing that no one among the Huns understood the use of this

thing, appointed him *balneator*, so that the wretched architect was forced to remain to serve the bath he had built.

Onegesius had only just returned from an important expedition when Attila arrived in his capital with the Imperial envoys. He had been engaged in finishing the conquest of Acatziri and was immediately closeted with the King on his return, so that Maximin was not received by him on that first day. In his anxiety the ambassador grew impatient, and very early upon the following morning he dispatched Priscus with presents to wait upon the minister. Priscus found the enclosure shut and no one stirring and while he waited for the house to awake he walked up and down in the dawn to keep himself warm. Suddenly he was greeted with the Greek salutation Χαῖρε, "Hail," or, as we should say, "Good morning." Startled to hear a civilised tongue in the midst of Barbary he returned the greeting. And there followed one of the most interesting discussions of which we have any record, of the respective merits of civilisation and barbarism, a debate that must have filled in the minds of many at that time. Priscus at last asked the stranger how he was come to be amongst the Barbarians. "Why do you ask

me?" answered the unknown. "Because you speak Greek like a native," answered Priscus. But the stranger only laughed. "Indeed," said he, "I am Greek. I came for the sake of business to Viminacium on the Danube in Moesia, and there I lived many years and married a rich wife. But when the Huns stormed the city I lost all my fortune and became the slave of this Onegesius whom you are waiting to see. For it is the custom of the Huns to give the richest to their princes. My new master took me to the wars where I did well not without profit. I have fought with the Romans and the Acatziri and have bought my liberty. I am now become a Hun, I have married a Barbarian wife and have children by her; I am often the guest of Onegesius, and to tell you the truth I consider my present station preferable to my past. For when war is over one lives here decently without worries, one enjoys one's own. War nourishes us; but destroys those who live under the Roman Government. Under Rome one has to trust to others for one's safety, since the law forbids one to bear arms even in self-defence, and those who are allowed to fight are betrayed by the ignorance and corruption of their leaders. And even so the evils of war under the Romans are as nothing to

the evils of peace, the insupportable taxations, the robbery of the tax-gatherers, and the oppression of the powerful. How can it be otherwise since there is there one law for the rich and another for the poor? If a rich man commits a crime he knows how to profit by it; but if a poor man transgresses the law, perhaps in ignorance, he knows not the formalities and is ruined. Justice can only be obtained at a great price, and this in my opinion is the worst of evils. You must buy an advocate to plead for you, and only after depositing a sum of money as security can you plead at all or obtain sentence."

Thus for a long time the renegade from civilisation defended himself and the Barbarians, and when at length he was silent Priscus begged him to listen patiently while he defended what, after all, was the future of the world. What appears most to have excited the animosity of the apostate was, as we might expect, the Roman law and its processes, and it is these that Priscus first defends. He explains the division of labour and responsibility peculiar to civilisation, the structure of the Roman State and society, divided, according to him, into three classes; those concerned with the making and administration of the law;

those concerned with national and public safety; and those who till the soil. He defends all this nobly and eloquently, the logic and clarity of its complexity against the appalling promiscuity and confusion of Barbarian anarchy. He shows the individual as a part of society, and in the main his view of civilisation is ours, we can applaud and understand it. Even the apostate stranger is moved at last. There in the Hunnish land at dawn one morning, carried back by the eloquence of Priscus to all he had lost, he weeps and exclaims: "The law of the Romans is good; their Republic nobly ordered, but evil magistrates have corrupted it." He might have said more but that just then a servant of Onegesius appeared and Priscus left him never to see him again.

In instructing Maximin especially to negotiate with Onegesius, Theodosius and Chrysaphius doubtless hoped to win this man by diplomacy as they thought they had won Edecon, by corruption. Their calculations were doomed to disappointment; for both Onegesius and Edecon seem to have been loyal to their master, and Edecon had already acquainted him with the plot against his life. It might seem certain that Onegesius also was

now aware of this. Having accepted the presents sent him, and learnt that Maximin desired to see him, he decided to visit him at once, and without delay repaired to the Roman encampment. There Maximin opened his business. He explained the necessity for peace between the Huns and the Empire, the honour of establishing which he hoped to share with Attila's minister, to whom he prophesied every sort of honour and benefit if he should succeed. But the Hun was not convinced. "How can I arrange such a peace?" he asked. "In short, by deciding the points in dispute between us with justice," as naively replied Maximin. "The Emperor will accept your decision." "But," answered Onegesius, "I have no will but that of my master." He did not understand the difference between civilisation and barbarism any more than the modern German sees the gulf fixed between Civilisation and "Kultur." "Slavery," said he, "would be sweeter to me in the kingdom of Attila than all the honours and all the wealth of the Roman Empire." Then as though to soften what he had said, he added that he could serve the cause of peace which Maximin had at heart better at the Court of Attila than at Constantinople.

But it was now time to present the Queen—a favourite wife of Attila—with her gifts. This embassy was again entrusted to Priscus. He found her in her apartments seated on cushions surrounded by her women and slaves on either side, the women at work embroidering clothes for the men. It was on coming out from these apartments that Priscus saw Attila for the first time since his arrival. Hearing a great noise he went to see what was the cause and soon perceived the Hun with Onegesius on the way to administer justice before the gate of his palace. There too within the enclosure he found the Roman ambassadors from Ravenna. With them he compared notes, and soon learned that they had been no more successful than Maximin. But presently Onegesius sent for him and informed him that Attila was determined to receive no more ambassadors from Theodosius unless they were of consular rank, and he named three persons who would be acceptable. Priscus naively answered that thus to designate ambassadors must necessarily render them suspect to their own Government, forgetting that Maximin had done the same but a few hours before. But Onegesius answered roughly: "It must be so or there will be war." Much disheartened

Priscus made his way back to the Roman camp and there found Tatallus, the father of Orestes, who had come to inform Maximin that Attila expected him to dine with him.

This dinner to which the ambassadors of Valentinian were also invited took place in a large *salone* furnished with little tables for four or five persons each, at three o'clock in the afternoon. Upon the threshold the ambassadors were offered cups of wine in which to drink the health of the King, who reclined in the midst before a table, on a couch set upon a platform or dais, so that he was set up above his guests; beside him but lower sat Ellak his heir, who dared not lift his eyes from the ground. Upon his right were Onegesius and two other sons of the King, upon his left were placed the ambassadors. When all were assembled Attila drank to Maximin who stood up to acknowledge his condescension and drank in return. A like ceremony was performed by all the ambassadors in turn. Then the feast was served upon plates and dishes of silver and the wine in cups of gold; only Attila ate and drank from wooden dishes and a wooden cup. Before each course the drinking ceremony of salutation was performed again, and as the banquet

lasted well on into the darkness, when torches were lighted and Hunnish poets sang or chanted their verses in the Barbarian tongue celebrating the glories of war and victory to the delight of the assembly whose eyes shone with emotion, the young with tears of desire and the old with fright, few can have been sober when a buffoon and then the famous dwarf Zercan began to set the tables in a roar; though Attila remained grave and unmoved.

So the days passed without anything being accomplished. The impatient ambassadors were compelled to attend a similar dinner given in their honour by the Queen Kerka, and again they dined with Attila; but nothing was discussed or decided. Several times, indeed, Attila spoke to Maximin of a matter he apparently had at heart, namely, the marriage of his secretary Constantius, who some years earlier had been sent to Constantinople, and whom Theodosius had promised a rich wife on condition that peace was not broken. The wife chosen, however, was spirited away and this had become a grievance, Attila being so enraged that he sent word to Theodosius that if he could not keep order in his own house, he, Attila, would come and help him. Of course Constantius was promised

another and a richer heiress, and it was this matter that Attila preferred to discuss with Maximin rather than the letter he had brought from the Emperor.

At last, in despair, Maximin demanded leave to depart, and this appears to have been granted as soon as Attila knew that Vigilas was on his way back from Constantinople. It is possible that the Hun had only detained the ambassadors as hostages, or to satisfy himself that they were ignorant of the plot against his life. They went at last without satisfaction, but not empty-handed. Attila had them loaded with presents, skins, horses, embroideries, nor was their journey back without incident. A few days' march on their way, near the frontier, Priscus tells us they saw the horrid and ill-omened spectacle of a refugee crucified beside the road. A little further on they saw two Romans put to death with every sort of barbarous cruelty before their eyes. These were the reminders of Attila. Not far from the Danube they met Vigilas and his Hunnish companion, in reality his guard, Esla.

This conceited fool, for indeed he was as much a fool as a villain, had with him twice the weight of gold promised to Edecon, and,

moreover, he brought also his only son, a youth of six-and-twenty years. He had altogether delivered himself into Attila's hands. Leaving Maximin and his embassy to make their way back to Constantinople Vigilas went on into Barbary, intent on the assassination of Attila, and had no sooner set foot in the Hunnish capital than he was seized, his baggage opened and the gold discovered. When asked to explain these riches, he answered that they were for his own use and that of his entourage, and that he proposed to ransom the Roman captives and to purchase horses, skins and embroideries. "Evil beast," shouted Attila, "thou liest, but thy lies deceive none." Then he bade seize the youth Vigilas' son, and swore to have him killed there and then if the father did not confess. Then Vigilas, seeing his child in so great a peril, became demented and cried out: "Do not kill my son, for he is ignorant and innocent of all; I alone am guilty." And he confessed all the plot to kill Attila that Chrysaphius had devised with him. And Attila heard him out, and seeing what he said agreed with the report of Edecon he knew he heard the truth. After a little he bade loose the youth and sent him back to Constantinople to bring him another hundred

pounds' weight of gold for the ransom of Vigilas his father, whom he loaded with chains, and flung into prison. And with the young man he sent two ambassadors, Orestes and Esla, with his demands to the Emperor.

They came to Constantinople; they had audience of Theodosius. Round the neck of Orestes hung the sack in which Vigilas had brought the price of assassination to Barbary. Esla, as he stood there, demanded of Chrysaphius if he recognised it, and when he answered not, turned to the Emperor and said, "Attila, son of Moundzoukh, and Theodosius are two sons of noble fathers; Attila has remained worthy of his parent, but Theodosius has betrayed his because in paying tribute to Attila he has owned himself his slave. Nor as a slave has he been faithful to his master, nor will Attila cease to proclaim his iniquity, for he has become the accomplice of Chrysaphius the eunuch since he does not deliver him to punishment as he deserves."

There was no answer. Humiliated and afraid the Emperor did everything according to the bidding of Attila, save only he refused him the head of Chrysaphius. The greatest officers of the Empire were sent as ambassadors and Attila humiliated them at his pleasure; a

rich widow was found for Constantius, gold and silver were poured out at Attila's feet. Yet he demanded the head of Chrysaphius. At last, in the year 450, two Gothic messengers, it is said, arrived from the Hun, the one at Constantinople, the other at Ravenna. Upon the same day and at the same hour they appeared before Theodosius and Valentinian and delivered this message: "Attila, my master and thine, bids thee prepare a palace for him." Imperat per me Dominus meus et Dominus tuus Attilas, ut sibi palatium instruas.

That insolent message, if indeed it was ever delivered, fell upon deaf ears. Upon July 25, 450, Theodosius died, and three months later Placidia the mother and good genius of Valentinian, the real ruler of the West, died also. A new Emperor, Marcian, reigned at Constantinople. Chrysaphius was put to death, and Marcian, an old soldier, at once faced Attila with something of the ancient Roman energy. The Barbarian turned away to consider how he might loot the West.

V

THE ATTACK UPON THE WEST

V

THE ATTACK UPON THE WEST

IN turning from the East, where he did not like the look of Marcian, to the West, where the weak and sensual Valentinian, then thirty-one years old, seemed to offer himself as a prey, the universal robber needed a pretext for his attack. The matter of the plate of Sirmium he had either forgotten or he feared that concerning it he would be met and satisfied. He needed a bone of contention which it would be impossible for Valentinian to yield. He found it in Honoria, the Emperor's sister.

It will be remembered that in 435, fifteen years before, this wild and passionate girl, in disgrace at Constantinople, had sent her ring to Attila and had offered herself to him, to be his bride, as her mother had been the bride of Adolphus, the successor of Alaric. For fifteen years the Barbarian had forgotten this romantic proposal, and though he had kept her ring he had made no overtures or demands

of any sort for the lady. Upon the death of Placidia in 450 he recalled the affair, and at once sent a message to Valentinian claiming both Honoria and her property as his, and with her a half of the Western Empire. He asserted that he learned with the greatest surprise that his betrothed was on his account treated with ignominy and even imprisoned. For his part he could see nothing unworthy in her choice which in fact should have flattered the Emperor, and he insisted that she should at once be set at liberty and sent to him with her portion of the inheritance of her father, and the half of the Western Empire as her dowry.

To this amazing proposition Valentinian made answer that Honoria was already married, and that therefore she could not be the wife of the Hun, since unlike the Barbarians the Romans did not recognise polygamy or polyandry; that his sister had no claim to the Empire which could not be governed by a woman and was not a family inheritance. To all this Attila made no reply; only he sent Honoria's ring to Ravenna and persisted in his demands.

The insincerity of Attila's claims, the fact that they were but a pretext, is proved by

this that suddenly he dropped them altogether and never referred to them again. Honoria was as utterly forgotten as the plate of Sirmium. He tried another way to attain his end, became suspiciously friendly, swore that the Emperor had no friend so sure as he, the Empire no ally more eager to serve it.

The truth was that a pretext for attack far better than the withholding of Honoria had suddenly appeared. The province of Africa had been lost to the Romans by the invasion of the Vandals who were now governed by a man not unlike Attila himself, Genseric. It is true he was not a pagan like the Hun, but he was an Arian, and he had gathered under his banner all the Barbarians that surged among the ruins of the Roman cities of Africa. Genseric had married his son to the daughter of Theodoric, King of the Visigoths, but as this alliance did not bring him all he hoped, he returned the girl to her father minus her ears and her nose, which he had cut off. Fearing lest Theodoric should invoke the aid of the Empire against him for this unspeakable deed, Genseric had sought the alliance of Attila. A new vision opened before the Hun; he saw a new alliance, if not a new suzerainty, offered him with whose aid he might attack

the Empire both north and south, so that while he descended upon the richest of the European provinces of Rome—Gaul, Genseric should fall upon Italy herself. In this scheme for the final loot of the West Attila was still further encouraged by the fact that the Franks, the most warlike of the Barbarian tribes in Europe (that which was destined first to become Catholic and later to refound the Empire), were in anarchy by reason of the death of their chief, whose inheritance was in dispute between his two sons. The elder of these had appealed to Attila for his assistance, while the younger had turned to Rome and had become indeed the protégé, if not the adopted son, of the great Roman general Aetius. This young man at Aetius' suggestion went to Rome to petition the Emperor, and there Priscus saw him "a beardless boy, his golden hair floating on his shoulders."

Here was a quarrel after Attila's own heart. The Vandals should invade Italy from Africa, he would fall upon Gaul, the passages of the Rhine being opened for him by the Franks. He forgot all about Honoria. At once he sent a message to Valentinian informing him of his determination to attack the Visigoths and bidding him not to interfere. The Visigoths,

he declared, were his subjects, subjects who had escaped from his dominion, but over whom he had never abandoned his rights. He pointed out too how dangerous they were to the peace of the Empire, on whose behalf, as much as on his own, he now proposed to chastise them.

Valentinian replied that the Empire was not at war with the Visigoths, and that if it were it would conduct its own quarrels in its own way. The Visigoths, said he, dwelt in Gaul as the guests and under the protection of the Roman Empire, and in consequence to strike at them was to strike at the Empire. But Attila would not hear or understand. He insisted that he was about to render Valentinian a service, and then, confirming us in our opinion that his object was merely loot, sent to Theodoric bidding him not to be uneasy, for that he was about to enter Gaul to free him from the Roman yoke.

At the same time that the Visigoth received this message he also received one from Valentinian, greeting him as the "bravest of the Barbarians," and bidding him resist "the tyrant of the universe" who, like the modern Prussian, "knows only his necessity, regards whatever suits him as lawful and legitimate, and is deter-

mined to bring the whole world under his domination." Theodoric, in much the same position as modern Belgium, according to Jornandes, cried out, as King Albert might have done in August last: "O Romans, you have then at last your desire; you have made Attila at last our enemy also." But the Romans were as little to blame or able to help it as England or France. Attila, "the tyrant of the universe," had prepared and was intent upon war. All Theodoric could do was to be ready to defend himself.

Attila prepared to attack the West, but the same problem confronted the defenders then as yesterday, namely, by which road that attack would come. The Hun thundered against the Visigoths, but on this very account Aetius, like the French, thinking more subtly than the enemy, remained uncertain whether after all Italy would not be the victim rather than Gaul. He was wrong, like his representatives of to-day; the Barbarian was a barbarian, he believed in his own boasts.

An enormous army of every kind of Barbarian was gathered upon the Danube and in the provinces to the south of that river. This host may have numbered anything from half a million men upward; it was not less than

half a million strong. Each tribe had its chief, among which the two most famous were the kings of the Gepidae and the Ostrogoths; but all alike trembled before Attila, who had thus beneath his hands the most formidable and numerous hosts that had ever yet threatened civilisation. It was barbarism itself in all its innumerable multitude which was about to fling itself upon Gaul.

The plan of Attila—if plan it can be called—was well chosen. Gaul was more easily attacked than Italy and was little less essential to the future of Roman civilisation. It was then, as it has been ever since, the very heart of Europe. To destroy it was to destroy the future.

Gathering his innumerable peoples upon the borders of the Danube, Attila divided his armies into two parts. The first army was to march to the Rhine by the right or southern bank of the Danube, by the great Roman military way, past all the Roman fortresses of the frontier of the Empire, each of which was to be destroyed as it advanced. The second army was to march by the left or northern bank of the Danube, and to meet the first near the sources of that river where, in the great forests of Germany, the two armies

were to provide themselves with the materials necessary for their transport into Gaul. There, while they hewed down the trees in thousands, they were met by the Franks who had deserted or killed their young king the protégé of Aetius, and now flocked to his brother under the standard of Attila; certain of the Thuringians and the Burgundians also made common cause with them.

The chief business immediately before Attila was the passage of the Rhine, and it was in order to furnish material for bridges for this purpose that his armies had hewn down the trees by thousands in the ancient "Hercynian" forest. That passage would perhaps have been impossible and certainly very difficult if it had been contested. It was not contested, and to understand the reason why, we must understand the political condition of Gaul.

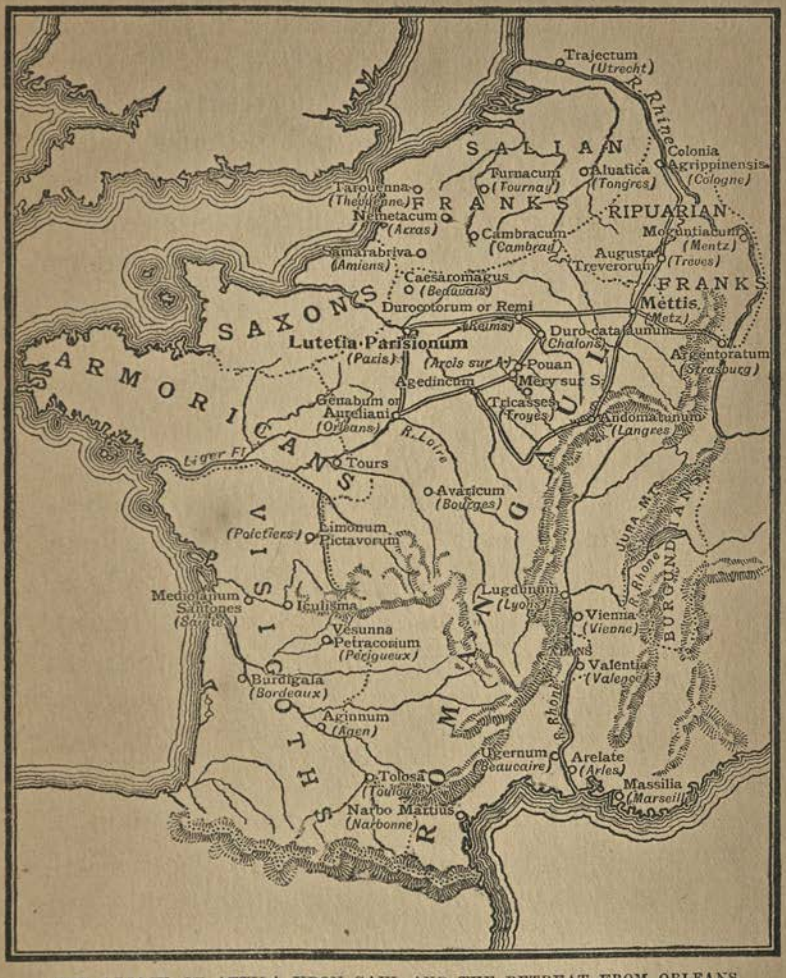
In the course of the last half-century the great province of Gaul had suffered grievously, though not so grievously as Britain, which had almost lost its identity, nor so hopelessly as Africa, which was completely lost to civilisation. What had happened was this: all the further parts of Gaul had fallen into the occupation of the Barbarians as well as that violated corner enclosed on the west by the

Jura, where the Burgundians had established themselves. In northern Gaul, in what we now call Picardy, Belgium and Luxembourg, the Franks were settled, the Salian Franks to the west about the cities of Tongres, Tournay, Arras, Cambrai, Amiens; the Ripuarian Franks to the east on either side the Rhine about Cologne, Mentz, Coblenz and Treves. To the south of the Salian Franks the Saxons held the coast and the lower reaches of the Seine, to the south of them lay Armorica, as far as the Loire, an isolated province of Bretons to the south of them as far as the Pyrenees, occupying all Aquitaine were the Visigoths under Theodoric. Central Gaul, however, with its cities of Metz, Strasburg, Troyes, Langres, Orleans, Lyons, Vienne, Arles, Narbonne, and the town of Lutetia or Paris, remained within the Roman power and administration which though in decay and very largely clericalised, as we shall see, was still a reality.

If Attila was bent on chastising the Visigoths it was obviously across this still Roman and Christian province of Central Gaul that he must march, and experience both in the East and the West had taught the Imperial Government that such a march meant the complete ruin, devastation and depopulation of every

city on the way. The natural frontiers of Gaul upon the East were and are the Rhine and the mountains. To hold them is the safety of Gaul, to lose them is destruction. Unfortunately, the Rhine could not be held against Attila. It could not be held because the chief crossing place at Confluentes (Coblenz) was in the power of the Franks, while a secondary crossing at Augst, now a village between Bâle and Mulhouse, was in the power of the Burgundians. Those gates were flung wide, and it was through them that Attila at last entered the heart of the West.

Confluentes (Coblenz) stood at the junction of the Moselle with the Rhine, and thence upon the left of the Moselle a great Roman road ran south-west to Augusta Treverorum (Treves), whence a whole series of roads set forth to traverse Gaul in every direction. From Confluentes, too, running north along the left bank of the Rhine, a road pushed on northward through Bonn to Cologne, whence again a great highway ran west and south across what is now Belgium and Picardy. This would seem to have been the main route of Attila's advance. At the southern entry at Augst his armies could await, meet and perhaps cut off or defeat any attack from Italy.



THE ATTACK OF ATTILA UPON GAUL AND THE RETREAT FROM ORLEANS

It was January when Attila set out, it was March when he found himself at last before the gates of Gaul upon the Rhine. The spring and summer lay all before him in which to ruin and to destroy what after all he could not understand.

VI

ATTILA'S ADVANCE FROM THE RHINE TO ORLEANS

VI

ATTILA'S ADVANCE FROM THE RHINE TO ORLEANS

IN the ruin of the secular Roman administration which the last fifty years had seen, in the terror which the threat of Attila's armies upon the Rhine roused everywhere in the great and noble province of Gallia, it would appear that many, if not all, of the cities still Roman, and above all Christian, found in some constant and dominating mind a substitute for, and a successor to, their ruined institutions. We see this in Tongres, in Metz, in Rheims, in Orleans, above all we see it, as we might expect, in Paris. The fate of these cities, the way they met their fate is illuminating; and if it is inexplicable and to our scepticism almost incredible, it is none the less certainly indicative of the condition, spiritual and political, of that still Roman society. It was Christianity which defeated Attila in Gaul as certainly as it alone was able later to turn him back from the destruction of Italy.

The real victory, in spite of the great strokes of Aetius, was a spiritual victory; a victory of Christianity over heathenism.

I forbear to draw the parallel with the struggle in which we are at present engaged. Happily the most striking fact of the present contest is that the Allies have at once seen through and cast from them the brutal and hopeless philosophy of blasphemy and bosh, of "necessity" and "frightfulness" which is the most violent form of atheism that has yet attacked European society. Germany will perish by her "Kultur" as certainly as the Huns did by their heathenism. Indeed, in action they are identical and rest upon the same hopelessness, the denial of the divinity not of God only but of man.

That the defeat of Attila was a Christian victory is obvious at once, if we follow his footsteps. He began his attack from the crossing of the Rhine at Confluentes and fell upon Belgic Gaul. Metz fell. "On the very vigil of the blessed Easter," says Gregory of Tours, "the Huns crossing out of Pannonia, burning as they came, entered Metz. They gave the city to the flames, massacred the people, putting all to the sword, killing even the priests before the altar of God. In all the

city nothing remained save the oratory of the blessed Stephen the Protomartyr and Levite." He asserts further that this chapel was spared only because St. Stephen himself invoked the aid of SS. Peter and Paul, who here already had superseded Romulus and Remus, it might seem, as the representatives of Rome, as Rome herself was about to become less the capital of the world than of the Catholic Church.

All Lorraine lay under the torch of the Hun. He passed on into Champagne. Rheims fell. The inhabitants had fled to the woods. St. Nicasius the bishop was cut down before the altar as he recited a part of the 118th Psalm: *Adhaesit pavimento anima mea; vivifica me secundum verbum tuum.* His sister, named Eutropia, fearing the brutality of the invaders, struck the murderer in the face and was cut down with her brother. Suddenly, we read, the church was filled with a strange thunder, the Huns fled in superstitious fear, deserting the half-destroyed town. On the following day the inhabitants returned to their ruins.

From Rheims the Hunnish flood swept on to St. Quentin and even to Tongres; all northern Gaul from the Marne to the Rhine was laid waste, everyone was a fugitive,—ruined, helpless. The peoples of the smaller

towns fled first to the greater, and then with the peasants fled into the hills and the woods. It is in the fate of one of these little towns later to be so famous, indeed the capital of the West, Lutetia or Paris, that we have the most characteristic as it is the most amazing episode of the defence.

Of St. Geneviève's life we know little apart from the legend which has transformed the wonderful reality into a delightful tale. St. Germanus of Auxerre found her under the hill of Valerian, a little girl of seven years, and his delight in her was but the first example of the influence her character was to have upon men and events. She was the spirit of Christian France incarnate. Joan of Arc is, as it were, but a repetition of her, and over that later and more famous maid she has this advantage; she was of Paris when Paris only had meaning, as it were, in her and her act.

Of her legend one can never have enough; but here I will only give that part of it which concerns this moment. "Tidings came to Paris," says Voragine, who has summed up in his marvellous narrative all the earlier hagiographers: "Tidings came to Paris that Attila the felon king of the Huns had enter-

prised to destroy and waste parts of France and to subdue them to his domination. The burgesses of Paris, for great dread that they had, sent their goods into other cities more sure. St. Geneviève warned and admonished the good women of the town that they should wake in fastings and in orisons by which they might assuage the ire of Our Lord and eschew the tyranny of their enemies, like as did sometime the holy women Judith and Esther. They obeyed her and were long and many days in the church in wakings, fastings and in orisons. She said to the burgesses that they should not remove their goods, nor send them out of the town of Paris, for the other cities that they supposed should be more sure, should be destroyed and wasted, but by the Grace of God Paris should have no harm. And some had indignation at her and said that a false prophet had arisen and appeared in their time and began among them to ask and treat whether they should not drown her or stone her. Whilst they were thus treating, as God would, came to Paris after the decease of St. Germain, the archdeacon of Auxerre, and when he understood that they treated together of her death he came to them and said: 'Fair sirs, for God's sake do not this mischief, for

she of whom ye treat, St. Germain witnesseth that she was chosen of God in her mother's belly and lo, here be letters that he hath sent to her in which he recommendeth him to her prayers.' When the burgesses heard these words recited by him of St. Germain and saw the letters, they marvelled and feared God and left their evil counsel and did no more thereto. Thus Our Lord kept her from harm, which keepeth always them that be his, and defendeth after that the apostle saith, and for her love did so much that the Tyrants approached not Paris, Thanks and glory to God and honour to the Virgin."

That is, as I say, the most characteristic and the most significant episode, as it is the most amazing, of the defence. Paris was not to fall, was not even to be attacked. Attila was surfeited with destruction and loot, he was forced now to concentrate his attention upon the attack on the Visigoths of the south lest Rome and Aetius should stand in his way and imperil his whole campaign. His plan must be to defeat the Visigoths before he was forced to face Aetius coming up out of Italy, and with this on his mind he set out from Metz with his main army, passed through Toul and Rheims, which were gutted, through

Troyes and Sens, which he was in too great haste to destroy, and over the Sologne, held then by his ally the King of the Alans, Sangibanus, and marched directly upon Orleans. That march represented the work of a whole month. He left Metz in the early days of April, he arrived before Orleans in the early days of May.

Orleans stands upon the most northern point of the Loire, the great river which divides Gaul east and west into a northern and a southern country. It has been the point around which the destinies of the Gauls have so often been decided—one has only to recall the most famous instance of all, the deliverance under Joan of Arc—that it is without surprise we see it fulfilling its rôle in the time of Attila also. From time immemorial, before the beginning of history, it had been an important commercial city, for it stood not only on one of the greatest and most fruitful rivers of western Europe, but, as I have said, upon the marches of the north and south, whose gate it was. No one could pass without its leave, at least in safety. Anciently it was known as Genabum and there had been planned and conceived the great revolt which so nearly engulfed Julius Cæsar, who burnt it

to the ground. It stood then, as later when it rose again, upon the northern bank of the river and was joined with the south by a great bridge. The resurrection after that burning was not long delayed, but it seems to have been less magnificent than might have been expected and it certainly suffered much from war, so that in 272, in the time of Aurelian, it was rebuilt with a wall about it, and for this cause took the name of the Emperor. Times, however, were sadly changed with the great city when Attila came into Gaul. Much certainly was in ruin, the municipal government in full decadence or transition and it was therefore with a dreadful fear in her heart that Orleans watched the oncoming of the Huns. Nevertheless the city put herself into a state of defence. The first direct assault upon her was made by that Sangibanus, King of the Alans, and Attila's ally, who requested to be allowed to garrison it. Orleans refused and closed her gates. At the same time she sent forth her bishop (and this is as significant of the true state of affairs of government in Gaul as the facts about Tongres, Rheims and Paris) into the south, still Roman, to Arles to learn when Aetius might be expected in relief and how far the Visigoths would move, not for

their own defence only, but against the common enemy.

Anianus, for such was the bishop's name, thus appears as the representative, the ambassador and the governor of the city. In Arles, to his delight, he found not only a secure and even splendid Roman government, but the great general himself, Aetius, who received him with impress. Anianus urged the necessity of an immediate assistance. He reckoned that it would be possible to hold out till the middle of June, but no longer. Aetius heard him patiently and promised that by then he would relieve the city. Anianus was not too soon, he had scarce returned to Orleans when Attila began the siege.

It will be asked, and with reason, why it was that Rome had waited so long before interfering to defend her great western province against this "wild beast"? Why had Aetius not marched out of Italy at the head of his armies months before? why had he waited till all the North was a ruin before he carried the eagles over the Alps and confronted this savage and his hordes with the ordered ranks of the army of civilisation? The answer may be found in the war we are fighting to-day against a similar foe. The French failed to

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defend the North against the modern Attila because they were too long uncertain which way he would come and where he would strike hardest. They could not be sure which was the decisive point of the German attack. This it was that kept so great a proportion of their armies in Alsace and upon that frontier. They credited the German with more subtlety than he possessed. They failed to grasp the gigantic simplicity of the Barbarian plan; the mighty hammer-stroke that shattered Belgium and plunged in to destroy all the North of France. They looked for something less blindly brutal and more wise. They could not believe that the German would destroy his whole case and outrage the moral consciousness of the world by violating the neutrality of Belgium. They failed to comprehend the essential stupidity of the Barbarian. They were wrong.

Aetius was wrong also, but with perhaps more excuse. He could not make up his mind where the real attack of Attila upon the Empire was to be delivered. What if the descent upon Gaul were but a feint and Italy were the real objective, Lombardy the true battlefield? There was this also; in Africa, Genseric, Attila's ally, waited and threatened to descend

upon the coast. Aetius overrated the intelligence of his enemy as much as did Joffre. Neither understood the force which opposed him, which it was to be their business and their glory to meet and to break.

Like Joffre, too, when Aetius at last found himself face to face with the reality of the situation he must have dared only not to despair. The successes of the Huns had decided the Visigoths to remain on the defence within their own confines; they refused to attack. Everywhere the Roman delay had discovered treason among the tribes who should have been their allies against a common foe. Aetius could only not despair. He addressed the Visigoths, though perhaps with more right, much as we might address to-day the Americans. "If we are beaten you will be the next to be destroyed; while if you help us to win yours will be the glory." The Visigoths replied as America is doing to-day: "It is not our business; see you to it."

They were wrong, the victory of Rome was as necessary for the future as our victory is to-day.

Much indeed was already achieved to that end by the mere presence of Aetius in Gaul.

Suddenly the whole country was changed, everywhere the peoples sprang to arms, the noble and the peasant, the bourgeois of the cities, the bond and the free. From Armorica came an heroic company, the Ripuarian Franks and the Salian Franks having seen the ruin of the Roman cities of the country they had been permitted to occupy, the Burgundians also returned to, if they had indeed ever left, their old allegiance. So successful at last was the diplomacy of Rome that when even Sangibanus appeared Aetius feigned to be ignorant of his treason. The great general prepared with a good heart for the attack, but was determined to do everything possible to mobilise the Visigoths with his other forces. It was with this object that at last he sought the aid of Avitus, the senator, a very great Gaulish nobleman who lived in the city of Clermont, the chief town of the Auvergne.

In Avitus we have a figure which at once arrests our attention amid all the welter of Barbarians of which even Gaul was full. In him we see, and are assured, that the civilisation of Rome was still a living thing in the West, that it had not been overwhelmed by savages or lost in a mist of superstition. Avitus indeed seems to have stepped suddenly

out of the great Roman time, he reminds us of what we have learned to expect a Roman noble of the time of Marcus Aurelius, or for that matter of St. Ambrose, to be. In him we see one we can greet as a brother; we should have been able to discuss with him the decline of the Empire. A rich man, coming of a noble family which for long had enjoyed the highest honour and the heaviest official responsibility, a scholar, a connoisseur, above all a somewhat bored patriot, he was also a soldier distinguished for his personal courage. He had already in 439 been successful in arranging a treaty for Rome with the Visigoths, and it was to him in this hour of enormous peril that Aetius turned again. He found him in his beautiful, peaceful and luxurious villa of Avitacum amid the foothills of the mountains of Auvergne, living as so many of our great nobles of the eighteenth century lived, half a farmer, half a scholar, wholly epicurean and full of the most noble self-indulgence, surrounded by his family, his son and daughter, and his friends, poets and scholars and delightful women. His son Ecdicius was the heir both of his wealth and his responsibilities, his daughter Papianella had married Sidonius Apollinaris of Lyons, a man already famous

as a poet and coming of a distinguished Gallo-Roman family. It was this man who in the moment of crisis appeared on behalf of civilisation at the Visigoths' Court—we could not have had a more noble representative.

His mission was wholly successful; but the time spent in showing the Visigoths where their interests lay was to cost Orleans dear. The devoted city wholly surrounded and every day submitted to the assaults and the clouds of arrows of the Huns, hearing no news of any relief, was in despair. In vain the Bishop Anianus went in procession through the streets, and even among the troops on the ramparts, bearing the relics of his church; they called him traitor. Still firm in his faith in God and in the promise of Aetius, daily he made men climb the last high tower in expectation of deliverance. None came, no sign of the armies of Aetius could be discerned. Day after day the mighty roads southward lay in the sun white and empty of all life. At last he sent by stealth a messenger to Aetius with this message: "My son, if you come not to-day it will be too late." That messenger never returned. Anianus himself began to doubt and at last heard counsels of surrender almost without a protest; indeed consented himself

to treat with the Huns. But Attila was beside himself at the length of the resistance, he would grant no terms. Nothing remained but death or worse than death.

Upon the following morning, the week having been full of thunder, the first rude cavalry of the Huns began to enter the city through the broken gates. The pillage and massacre and rape began, and, as to-day in Belgium, we read with a certain order and system. Nothing was spared, neither the houses of the citizens, nor their holy places, neither age nor sex. It seemed as though all would perish in a vast and systematic vandalism and murder.

Suddenly a cry rose over the noise of the butchery and destruction. The Eagles! The Eagles! And over the mighty bridge that spans the Loire thundered the cavalry of Rome, and the tumultuous standards of the Goths. They came on; nothing might stop them. Step by step they won the bridge head, they fought upon the shore, in the water, through the gates. Street by street, fighting every yard, the Imperial troops pushed on, the glistening eagles high overhead. House by house, alley by alleyway was won and filled with the dead; the Huns broke and fled, the horses stamped out their faces in the byways,

in the thoroughfares there was no going, the Barbarian carrion was piled so high; Attila himself was afraid. He sounded the retreat.

That famous and everlasting day was the 14th of June, for Aetius had kept his word. Orleans had begun the deliverance of Gaul and of the West.

VII

THE RETREAT OF ATTILA AND THE BATTLE OF THE CATALAUNIAN PLAINS

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THE retreat of Attila from Orleans would seem to have been one of the most terrible of which we have any record. The Gothic chronicler Jornandes, writing a hundred years after the events he describes, wholly or almost wholly at the mercy of a Gothic and so a Barbarian legend, would seem, though poorly informed as to facts and details, to be fully justified in the general impression he gives of the horror and disaster which befell the Hunnish host. It is certain that Attila's withdrawal of his army must have been not only difficult but impossible without disaster : too many and too brutal crimes had been committed for the ruined population of northern Gaul to permit it an easy passage in retreat. The devastated country could no longer supply its needs, everywhere ruined men awaited revenge : it can have been little less than a

confused flight that Attila made with his thousands towards the Rhine, with Aetius and Theodoric ever upon his flanks.

Nor was he to escape without battle. The Imperial armies pressing on behind him gained upon him daily, a sufficient comment upon his state, and it was really in despair that he reached at last the city of Troyes, more than a hundred miles from Orleans, an open city which there might, he hoped, be time to loot, and so to restore to some extent the confidence and the condition of his people. That he was not able to loot Troyes is the best evidence we could have of the energy of the Imperial pursuit; but here again we meet with one of those almost incredible interpositions of the spiritual power that we have already seen at Tongres, at Rheims, at Paris, and not least at Orleans. It must have meant almost everything to Attila on his hurried and harassed road north-east out of Gaul to be able to feed and to rest his army at Troyes, where the great road by which he had come crossed the Seine. That he was not able to do this was doubtless due fundamentally to the pressure of Aetius upon his flanks, but there was something more, we are told. Just as Anianus of Orleans had by his prayers saved his city, so Lupus of Troyes

defended his town in the same way. He, the Bishop, and now perhaps the governor, of Troyes went forth to Attila, faced and outfaced him, and indeed so impressed and even terrified the superstitious Barbarian that he left Troyes alone and passed on, taking only the Bishop himself with him a prisoner in his train. "For," said he, mocking him even in his fear, "if I take a man so holy as you with me I cannot fail of good luck even to the Rhine."

Attila passed on; he had crossed the Seine; before him lay the passage of the Aube, and it was here that the advance guard of the Imperial armies first got into touch with their quarry. It was night. Attila had left the Gepidae to hold the crossing, and it was they who felt the first blows of Aetius whose advance guard was composed of Franks; the fight endured all night and at dawn the passage was won and some 15,000[1] dead and wounded lay upon the field. Attila had crossed into Champagne, but the Imperial army was already at his heels; he would have to fight. The battle which followed, one of the most

[1] Jornandes, *R. Get.*, 41. According to the Abbe Dubos the "XC millibus" which appears in the text of Jornandes is the mistake of a copyist for "XV millibus."

famous as it is one of the most important in the history of Europe, whose future was there saved and decided, would seem to have been fought all over that wide and bare country of Champagne between the Aube and the Marne, and to have been finally focussed about the great earthwork still called the Camp of Attila by Châlons; it is known to history as the battle of the Catalaunian plains.

It may well be that the fight at the passage of the Aube had given Attila time to reach that great earthwork, one of the most gigantic and impressive things in Europe, which rises out of that lost and barren country of Champagne like something not wholly the work of man. There he halted; convinced at last that he could not escape without battle, he encamped his army and made ready for the conflict.

In this terrible and tragic place he held council, and superstitious as ever in the supreme moment of his career, began to consult an endless procession of soothsayers, augurs and prophets upon the coming battle. From the entrails of birds, or the veins upon the bones of sheep, or the dying gestures of some animal, his sorcerers at last dared to proclaim to him his coming defeat, but to

save their heads, perhaps, they added that the general of his enemies would perish in the conflict. It is sufficient witness to the genius of Aetius, to the fear he inspired in the Hun, and should be a complete answer to his enemies and traducers, that Attila, when he heard this, from despair passed immediately to complete joy and contentment. If after all Aetius defeated him at the price of his life, what might he not recover when his great adversary was no more! He therefore made ready with a cheerful heart for the conflict. Jornandes, whom we are bound to follow, for he is our chief, if not quite our only authority for all this vast onslaught of the Hun upon the Gaul, describes for us, though far from clearly, the configuration and the development of the battle. In following this writer, however, it is necessary to remember that he was a Goth, and relied for the most part upon Gothic traditions; also, above all, it is necessary not to abandon our common sense, protest he never so insistently.

Jornandes tells us that Attila put off the fight as long as possible and at last attacked, or so I read him, not without fear and trepidation, about three o'clock in the afternoon, so that if fortune went against him the on-

coming of night might assist him to escape. He then sketches the field. Between the two armies, if I read him aright, was a rising ground which offered so much advantage to him who should occupy it that both advanced towards it, the Huns occupying it with their right and the Imperialists with their right, composed of auxiliaries.

On the right wing of the Romans Theodoric and his Visigoths held the field, on the left wing Aetius and the Romans; between them holding the centre and himself held by Aetius and Theodoric was the uncertain Alan Sangiban.

The Huns were differently arranged. In the midst, surrounded by his hardest and best warriors, stood Attila considering as ever his personal safety. His wings were wholly composed of auxiliaries, among them being the Ostrogoths with their chiefs; the Gepidae with their King; and Walamir the Ostrogoth; and Ardaric, King of the Gepidae, whom Attila trusted and loved more than all others. The rest, a crowd of kings and leaders of countless races, waited the word of Attila. For Attila, king of all kings, was alone in command and on him alone depended the battle.

The fight began, as Jornandes insists, with a struggle for the rising ground between the two armies. The advantage in which seems to have rested with the Visigoths, under Thorismund, who thrust back the Huns in confusion. Upon this Attila drew off, and seeing his men discouraged, seized this moment to harangue them, according to Jornandes, somewhat as follows :

" After such victories over so many nations, after the whole world has been almost conquered, I should think it ridiculous to rouse you with words as though you did not know how to fight. I leave such means to a new general, or to one dealing with raw soldiers. They are not worthy of us. For what are you if not soldiers, and what are you accustomed to if not to fight; and what then can be sweeter to you than vengeance and that won by your own hand ? Let us then go forward joyfully to attack the enemy, since it is always the bravest who attack. Break in sunder this alliance of nations which have nothing in common but fear of us. Even before they have met you fear has taught them to seek the higher ground and they are eager for ramparts on these wide plains.

" We all know how feebly the Romans bear

their weight of arms; it is not at the first wound, but at the first dust of battle they lose heart. While they are forming, before they have locked their shields into the *testudo*, charge and strike, advance upon the Alans and press back the Visigoths. Here it is we should look for speedy victory. If the nerves are cut the members fail and a body cannot support itself upright when the bones are dragged out of it. Lift up your hearts and show your wonted courage, quit you like Huns and prove the valour of your arms, let the wounded not rest till he has killed his enemy, let him who remains untouched steep himself in slaughter. It is certain that nothing can touch him who is fated to live, while he will die even without war who will surely die. And wherefore should fortune have made the Huns the vanquishers of so many nations if it were not to prepare them for this supreme battle? Why should she have opened to our ancestors a way through the marshes of Azov unknown till then if it were not to bring us even to this field? The event does not deceive me; here is the field to which so much good fortune has led us, and this multitude brought together by chance will not look into the eyes of the Huns. I myself will be the first to hurl my

spear against the enemy, and if any remain slothful when Attila fights, he is but dead and should be buried."

These words, says Jornandes, warmed the hearts of the Huns so that they all rushed headlong into battle.

We know really nothing of the tremendous encounter which followed, the result of which saved the Western world. It is true that Jornandes gives us a long account of it, but we are ignorant how far it is likely to be true, whence he got it, and how much was his own invention. That the battle was immense, we know; Jornandes asserts that it had no parallel and that it was such that, if unseen, no other marvel in the world could make up for such a loss. He tells us that there was a tradition that a stream that passed over the plain was swollen with blood into a torrent: "they who drank of it in their thirst drank murder." It was by this stream, according to Jornandes, that Theodoric, King of the Visigoths, was thrown from his horse and trampled under foot and slain, and so fulfilled the prophecy which Attila's sorcerers had declared to him. The fall of the King appears so to have enraged the Visigoths—and here we must go warily with Jornandes—that they

engaged the enemy more closely and almost slew Attila himself in their fury. Indeed, it was their great charge which flung him and his guard, the Hunnish centre, back into the mighty earthwork which before them seemed but a frail barrier so enormous was their rage. Night fell upon the foe beleaguered and blockaded within that mighty defence.

In that night Thorismund, the son of Theodoric, was lost and found again. Aetius, too, separated in the confusion of the night from his armies, found himself, as Thorismund had done, among the waggons of the enemy, but like Thorismund again found his way back at last and spent the rest of the night among the Goths.

When day dawned, what a sight met the eyes of the allies. The vast plains were strewn with the dying and the dead, 160,000 men had fallen in that encounter, and within that terrible earthwork lay what was left of the Huns, wounded and furious, trapped as Alfred trapped Guthrum later upon the Wiltshire downs.

The battle had cost the Imperialists dear enough. Nor was their loss all. The death of Theodoric brought with it a greater anxiety and eventually cost Aetius

his Gothic allies. A council of war was called. It was determined there to hold Attila and starve him within his earthwork. In the meantime search was made for the body of Theodoric. After a long time this was found, "where the dead lay thickest," and was borne out of the sight of the enemy, the Goths "lifting their harsh voices in a wild lament." It is to be supposed that there Theodoric was buried. And it is probable that the bones and swords and golden ornaments and jewels which were found near the village of Pouan by the Aube in 1842 may well have been the remains of Theodoric and his funeral, for the fight doubtless raged over a great territory, and it is certain that the king would be buried out of sight of the foe. On the other hand, these bones may have belonged to a Frankish chief who had fallen in the fight for the passage of the Aube.

But it is in his account of the events that followed the burial of Theodoric that we most doubt our guide Jornandes. He declares that Thorismund, Theodoric's son and successor, wished to attack the Hun and avenge his father's death; but that he consulted Aetius as the chief commander, who "fearing if the Huns were destroyed, the Goths might still

more hardly oppress the Empire, advised him to return to Toulouse and make sure of his kingdom lest his brothers should seize it. This advice Thorismund followed without seeing the duplicity of Aetius." Such an explanation of the treason of the Goths was doubtless accepted by the Gothic traditions and especially comfortable to Jornandes. It is incredible, because any observer could see that Attila was not so badly beaten that he was not a far greater danger to the Empire than ever the Visigoths could be. To let him escape, and that is what the departure of Thorismund meant, was treason, not to the Goths, but to the Empire. It served the cause not of Aetius but of Thorismund, not of Rome but of the Goths, whose loyalty was never above suspicion and whose slow adhesion to the Imperial cause had been the talk of Gaul and the scandal of every chancellery.

But Aetius could not have been much astonished by the desertion, and it was no less, of Thorismund. Rome was used to the instability of her Barbarian allies who if they really could have been depended upon, if they had really possessed the quality of decision, and known their own minds would no longer have been Barbarians. It was Attila who was

amazed. He had given himself up for lost when looking out from that dark earthwork at dawn he saw the Visigothic camp empty and deserted, and at the sight "his soul returned into his body." Without a moment's hesitation, broken as he was, he began a retreat that Aetius was not able to prevent or to turn into a rout, which he could only ensure and emphasise. Upon that long march to the Rhine all the roads were strewn with the Hunnish sick and wounded and dead, but the main army, what was left of the half-million that had made the invasion, escaped back into the forests of Germany. Gaul was saved, and with Gaul the future of the West and of civilisation. But Attila was not destroyed.

VIII

ATTILA'S ATTACK UPON AND RETREAT FROM ITALY

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IT might seem to be a hard question to answer whether Attila was really beaten or not in Gaul. This at least is certain, the retreat from Orleans to the Camp by Châlons was a disaster for him, and the great battle which followed was only not annihilating because of the desertion of the Visigoths. Attila saved what that retreat and battle had left of his army, and without delay, for necessity pushed him on, turned to prove upon the body of Italy itself that he was still the " universal tyrant " and the " scourge of God."

Historians of the decline and fall of the Empire, of the invasions of the Barbarians, have consistently expressed surprise, often not unmixed with contempt and derision, that Attila was allowed to escape. But it must be remembered that it is the almost unbroken characteristic of the Barbarian wars that the invaders did escape; so Alaric continually

avoided destruction at the hands of Stilicho; and if the Visigoths were thus able to save themselves how much more was Attila whose armies were so largely composed of mounted men. It might seem that the superiority of the Barbarian lay in just that, mobility; the rude and savage men that composed their armies were content and able to live upon the country they ravaged, they were not dependent as were the Imperial armies upon their bases and their supply; they were always a bolt shot at a venture. Their success is paralleled in our own day by that of the Boers in South Africa. We do not blame Roberts and Kitchener that they allowed De Wet to escape them for so long; we understand that it was inevitable it should be so. Not thus argued the Romans. Full of discontent, rotten with intrigue and corruption as the Imperial Government was, there were many who from personal hatred and ambition, or mere treason, blamed and traduced Aetius for the escape of Attila which they had planned and prayed for in their hearts. Any weapon was good enough to use against the great general who apparently suffered neither fools nor traitors gladly, and was as ambitious if as able as Stilicho. Every sort of calumny was used against him. It was

recalled that he had had intimate relations with Roua, the uncle of Attila, it was suggested that he had purposely spared the Huns.

To all this bitterness much was added by the acts of Aetius himself. Immeasurably proud, like Stilicho, he pretended to claim the hand of the Princess Eudoxia, the daughter of the Emperor Valentinian, for his son; moreover, among his other preparations against a new attack of Attila was a plan to remove the Emperor into Gaul; that he might replace him himself, his enemies declared. So violent grew the opposition to this last project that it had to be abandoned. Aetius was content to send Valentinian to Rome, while he himself, with his army, held Ravenna and the line of the Po.

In the first chapter of this book I have briefly explained the Imperial theory of the defence of Italy; that theory I have at greater length, and I think for the first time, set forth in a previous work.[1] Here I must very briefly recapitulate in saying that the valley of the Po, the whole Cisalpine Plain between the Alps and the Apennines, was in the Imperial theory, and rightly, the defence of Italy. That defence was barred again upon the inward or

[1] See my "Ravenna; a Study" (Dent), 1912.

southern side by the barren and therefore impassable range of the Apennines,—impassable, that is, save at the eastern extremity, where the Via Emilia ran between the mountains and the sea into the city of Rimini. That narrow pass was commanded and held not by Rimini, which was indefensible, but by Ravenna which, on account of its position in the marshes, could not be taken and scarcely attacked. It was the due and wise recognition of these facts that caused the Emperor Honorius to take up his residence in Ravenna when Alaric crossed the Alps. That city had been the key to the defence of Italy ever since; it remained so now, therefore Aetius went thither gathering his army along the Via Emilia behind the line of the Po to await the final adventure of Attila.

Having failed to destroy the Eastern Empire, having failed in his attack upon the western provinces, the only thing that remained for Attila to attempt was the destruction and rape of the soul of all, the citadel of civilisation, Italy and Rome. It was the hardest task of all, therefore in his prudence, and he was always prudent, he had not tried it till now. It was his last throw. It was to fail, and that so contemptibly that his campaigns East and

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West in comparison seem like triumphs. Like Kaiser Wilhelm II., what Attila lacked in real force he strove to supply with blasphemy and boasting. He was as ill-informed and as ignorant of the real nature and strength of the forces opposed to him as the German statesmen of our day; he exaggerated and relied upon the corruption of the Empire; above all, like the Kaiser, he failed to see that the future frowned against him dark and enormous as the Alps.

Tradition rightly imposed upon Aetius the defence of Italy at the expense as it were of Cisalpine Gaul; it insisted that Cisalpine Gaul was to be the scene of the encounter. He determined to hold the line of the Po as he had held the line of the Loire; there was no need to be doubtful of his success. Already so many Barbarian invaders had found destruction in the immensity of that great plain. Nevertheless Aetius reinsured himself and Rome; he reinsured himself with Constantinople. It was no longer Theodosius the Calligrapher who sat on the Eastern throne, but Marcian the soldier. To him Valentinian sent ambassadors; Marcian heard them and promised an army. If, then, Aetius could lure Attila on far enough, but not too far for the safety of Italy, if he could hold him in the

Cisalpine Plain, Marcian coming into Pannonia would be in time to cut off his retreat, and so at last the Hun would be utterly destroyed, and the bones of his great host might bleach beside the rivers of Lombardy. There at any rate we have the best explanation of what followed.

Before the winter was over, the winter of 451–452, Attila was already moving south-west out of Barbary over the Danube, and at last by the great Roman road through Pannonia, crossing the Julian Alps as Alaric had done before him to cross the Isonzo, to lay siege to the first great Italian fortress, then perhaps, save Ravenna, the strongest place in all Italy, Aquileia, the capital of the province of Venetia. The walls of this mighty stronghold which was some sixty stadia from the sea were washed by the rivers Natiso and Turrus. I say it was, save Ravenna, the strongest place in Italy. It had been made so about the end of the fourth century, but it had much longer ranked third among Italian fortresses, only outstripped by Milan and Capua. Though set in the plain it was so strongly held with walls and towers that it enjoyed the reputation of being impregnable. Both Alaric and Radagaisus had passed it by; in the early spring of

452 Attila laid siege to it. For three months he laboured in vain; no engine he possessed, no contrivance he could command, no labour he could compel, were enough to break those Roman walls and to batter down the gates of this virgin fortress. He hoped to starve it out, but in three months the number of his armies, their depredations and ravages of the country-side began to tell far more against him than against the beleaguered city. Living on the country as he must do he was himself like to go hungry; moreover the spring heats in the marshy plains were already due, his hosts were discontented, they expected the loot of Italy, they began to remember the siege of Orleans and the battle of Châlons.

Furious at being denied, enraged with his people, and perhaps most of all with himself, the Hun was about to pass on as Alaric had done in spite of the danger which was greater far now than in the time of the Goth, when one evening, so it is said, as he moodily rode within sight of the walls and towers of his inaccessible prey after the heat of the day he saw by chance a stork preparing to leave her nest on one of the towers of the great city, and to fly with her young into the country. In this he saw an assurance of victory. On the morrow once

more he hounded his Huns to the assault: and no man since that day has found even the ruins of Aquileia.[1] It was not defeat, it was extermination, complete pillage, and fire. So horrible were the cruelties there committed that they can only be compared with what the Germans have done, and in our day, in Belgium. History records the fate of a young and beautiful woman, Dougna by name, who, pursued by a band of Huns, wrapped her head in her veil and flung herself from the walls into the Natiso.

The fall of Aquileia, the extermination of its inhabitants and the horrors that were committed terrorised all Venetia. It was the Prussian doctrine of "frightfulness" carried out with as little scruple as, though more excuse than, that we have seen at work with so great an amazement, and rage, and disgust here in the West upon the body of our God-child Belgium. Attila marched on; Altinum and Concordia suffered the same fate; they too disappear from the pages of history; Padua and Modena were ravaged and burnt. Vicenza, Verona, Brescia, Bergamo, Milan and Pavia opened their gates, they were but

[1] So Jornandes who asserts that Aquileia was so utterly destroyed "ita ut vix ejus vestigia ut appareant reliquerint."

spoiled, their inhabitants exchanged death for slavery. In that long night such as might flee fled away doubtless demanding of God whither they should go. God led them to the lagoons.

That Attila thought he was already victorious when he looked on his ruins as Kaiser Wilhelm did when his "heart bled from Louvain" (blood from a stone indeed!) is an incident twice recorded by Suidas beyond witness. It seems that in Milan, among the mural decorations of the palace, was one representing two Roman Emperors enthroned and clothed in the purple with certain Barbarians, Huns or Scythians, prostrate, demanding mercy at their feet. This work Attila ordered to be effaced and in its stead to be painted one in which he himself sat enthroned, while before him the two Roman Emperors poured gold from great sacks which they bore on their backs. A witty, if brutal jest; futile, too, since along the Po still flashed the eagles of Aetius and already over the Alps came the rumour of the armies of Byzantium.

And, indeed, in the heart of Attila there was more fear than hope, fear of the gods of this strange and lovely country he had ruined, of the gods of the marshes and the heats that were already devastating his armies with fever, of

those gods Peter and Paul whom he had already learnt to dread in Gaul and whose City, the most ancient and the most holy in the world, it was in his heart next to ravage and to sack; fear of his own armies now heavy with loot and riches, anxious for home and already on the verge of starvation in a country they had made utterly barren; fear most of all, perhaps, of his own destiny. "What," he asked himself, "if I conquer like Alaric only to die as he did?"

That the very name of Rome was still terrible to the Barbarians is certain. They feared her name. Nevertheless the pride of Attila and his ambition conquered his fear of his army, of his destiny, of the name of Rome. He was determined to go on, and with this intention he ordered his troops to concentrate from Padua, Vicenza, Verona, Brescia, Bergamo, Milan and Pavia upon Mantua, whence he proposed to cross the Po, probably at Hostilia, and so to descend upon the Via Emilia at Bologna.

This move seems to have disturbed Rome profoundly. The enemies of Aetius were there in the ascendant with the Emperor, and their influence with the government was enough to cause a deep disquietude with regard to the

strategy of the great general. They remembered Alaric; they remembered Radagaisus; they recalled the fate of Orleans, and the escape after the battle of Châlons, above all they whispered of Aquileia, Altinum and Concordia which were no more. In this state of panic they left Aetius out of account, they forgot the army of Marcian already on the move, they repudiated the whole strategy of their general and with it their own traditions. They decided to send an especial and unprecedented embassy to Attila, to offer a price for the safety of Italy. The ambassador they chose was the Pope.

Perhaps this amazing act ought not to astonish us, for we have seen the like so often in Gaul. The acts of Anianus of Orleans, of Lupus of Troyes, should have prepared us for the supreme act of S. Leo the Great. That they have not done so is sufficient to prove to us that we have failed to understand the time. Moreover, this great embassy was not the first Leo had undertaken on behalf of the Imperial Court. During the pontificate of Sixtus III (432–40), when Leo was Roman Deacon, Valentinian III had sent him to Gaul to settle a dispute and bring about a reconciliation between Aetius their chief military com-

mander in that province and Albinus the chief magistrate. Sixtus III died on August 19, 440, while Leo was in Gaul, and the ambassador was chosen as his successor.

The great Pope did not go alone upon this his last great mission, with him were two illustrious nobles, the Consul Gennadius Avienus, who after the Emperor was the greatest noble in the West, and the Prefect Trigetius. They set out from Rome by the Via Flaminia and met Attila as they had intended before he crossed the Po, on the Mincio near Mantua—in a place called the Campus Ambuleius. It was there one of the most grave and famous conferences that have ever been held in Europe met.

The ambassadors were all in official dress, Leo wore his pontifical vestments, the golden mitre, a chasuble of purple with the pallium. It was he who dealt with Attila, in what manner we know not, but with complete success. It was not the armies of Aetius after all that saved Italy, and with Italy all that was worth having in the world, but an old and unarmed man, Leo our Pope, for above him in the sky the Hun perceived, so he declared, the mighty figures of S. Peter and S. Paul; his eyes dazzled, he bowed his head. Yielding, he consented to retreat and evacuate Italy and the Empire.

It is as though the new head and champion of civilisation, of Christendom, had declared himself. It was the Pope.

The terms of the treaty then made were doubtless shameful enough to old Roman ideas, for they certainly involved an annual tribute to the Hun, from whom, moreover, no indemnity was exacted for the ruin of the Transpadana. But the great fact of the situation created by Leo overshadowed all this; Italy, the soul of the West, was saved. If, as we have a right to suppose, Aetius had no direct part in this achievement, both he and Marcian were probably indirectly responsible for it and in fact had far more to do with it than Leo. Were the Roman armies nothing, then, or the Byzantine threat against Attila's communications only a dream ?

Not so. Attila retreated because like another Barbarian he "could do no other," and even so he dared not retrace his way over the Julian Alps, for Marcian was already in Moesia, and ready and anxious to meet and to punish him. He retreated instead upon that Verona which he had ruined, crossed the Alps there, and after pillaging Augsburg, was lost, as it proved for ever, in the storm of the north and the darkness of his Barbary.

IX

ATTILA'S HOME-COMING

IX

ATTILA'S HOME-COMING

SUCH was the return, such was the failure of Attila. He had looked to hold the world in fee; he returned for the last time across the Danube his desire unaccomplished, his hopes dead. He had struck first the East and perhaps ruined it, but he had failed to take Constantinople. He had struck Gaul and left its cities shambles, but he had not destroyed the armies of Aetius. He had desired Rome for his plunder and his pride, but Leo had turned him back before he crossed the Po. Every attack had ended in a long retreat; if he brought ruin to a hundred Imperial cities, at last he but achieved his own. He returned to his wooden stockade in the heart of Hungary with all his hopes unfulfilled, all his achievements undone, a ruined man.

That he did not realise his failure is but to emphasise the fact that he was a Barbarian. To him, doubtless, destruction and booty, ruin and loot seemed the end of war, he had

not even in this his last hour begun to understand what the Empire was. And so if we ask ourselves what in reality the enormous energy of the Hunnish onslaught achieved in the first half of the fifth century, we are compelled to answer, nothing; nothing, that is, consciously and directly. Unconsciously and indirectly, however, the restless brutality of Roua and of Attila brought to pass these two great and even fundamental things; it was the cause of the passing of Britain into England, and it founded the republics of the lagoons which were to produce Venice the Queen of the Adriatic.

Of all this, of his failure as of those strange achievements, Attila was wholly unaware. He came home like a conqueror to his wooden palace in the midst of a great feast prepared for him, to be greeted as Priscus describes he had been greeted before, on his return from the ruin of the East and his failure to reach Constantinople. He had made the West his tributary; he was laden with the gold and the spoil of northern Italy. It was enough for him, and so he made ready with joy to marry yet another wife, to add yet one more to his concubines; not that Honoria who would have been the sign of his victory, but one rather a

prey than a prize, pitiful in her youth and helpless beauty, Ildico, or as the German legends call her Hildegrude, perhaps a Frankish or a Burgundian princess.

It is said, we know not with how much truth, that upon that long and last retreat as he crossed the river Lech by Augsburg an old woman with streaming hair, a witch or a sorceress, cried out to him thrice as he passed, "Retro Attila!" It is part of the legend which makes so much of his history.

Upon the night of his last orgy or wedding he had feasted and drunk beyond his wont and he was full of wine and of sleep when he sought the bed of the beautiful and reluctant Ildico, the last of his sacrifices and his loot. What passed in that brutal nuptial chamber we shall never know. In the morning there was only silence, and when his attendants at last broke into the room they found Attila dead in a sea of blood, whether murdered by his victim or struck down by apoplexy cannot be known. It is said that Ildico had much to avenge—the murder of her parents and her brothers as well as her own honour.

From that dreadful, characteristic chamber the Huns bore the body of their King, singing their doleful uncouth songs, to bury him in a

secret place prepared by slaves who were duly murdered when their work was accomplished. Jornandes has preserved or invented for us the great funeral dirge which accompanied the last Barbarian rite. It celebrated Attila's triumphs over Scythia and Germany which bore his yoke so meekly, and over the two Emperors who paid him tribute.

He left no memorial but his terror written in the fire and smoke of burning cities, and that tradition of "frightfulness" to which Kaiser Wilhelm II first appealed to his troops on their departure for China, and which he is practising upon the body of Europe to-day. For upon his death Attila's vast and barbaric hegemony fell to pieces. Enormous revolts broke it in sunder, and e'er many years had passed the very memory of it was forgotten.

"Kingless was the army left :
Of its head the race bereft.
Every fury of the pit
Tortured and dismembered it.
Lo, upon a silent hour,
When the pitch of frost subsides,
Danube with a shout of power
Loosens his imprisoned tides :
Wide around the frighted plains
Shake to hear his riven chains,
Dreadfuller than heaven in wrath,
As he makes himself a path :

High leap the ice-cracks, towering pile
Floes to bergs, and giant peers
Wrestle on a drifted isle;
Island on ice-island rears;
Dissolution battles fast:
Big the senseless Titans loom,
Through a mist of common doom
Striving which shall die the last:
Till a gentle-breathing morn
Fires the stream from bank to bank,
So the Empire built of scorn
Agonized, dissolved and sank."

SOURCES

I

AMMIANI MARCELLINI RERUM GESTARUM LIBER XXXI

II. 1. Totius autem sementem exitii et cladum originem diversarum, quas Martius furor incendio solito miscendo cuncta concivit, hanc comperimus causam. Hunnorum gens, monumentis veteribus leviter nota, ultra paludes Maeoticas glacialem oceanum accolens, omnem modum feritatis excedit. 2. Ubi quoniam ab ipsis nascendi primitiis infantum ferro sulcantur altius genae, ut pilorum vigor tempestivus emergens corrugatis cicatricibus hebetetur senescunt imberbes absque ulla venustate, spadonibus similes: compactis omnes firmisque membris, et opimis cervicibus: prodigiosae formae et pandi, ut bipedes existimes bestias, vel quales in commarginandis pontibus effigiati stipites dolantur incompte. 3. In hominum autem figura licet insuavi ita visi sunt asperi, ut neque igni, neque saporatis indigeant cibis, sed radicibus herbarum agrestium et semicruda cuiusvis pecoris carne vescantur, quam inter femora sua et equorum terga subsertam, fotu calefaciunt brevi. 4. Aedificiis nullis umquam tecti: sed haec velut ab usu communi discreta sepulchra declinant. Nec enim apud eos vel arundine fastigatum reperiri tugurium potest. Sed vagi montes peragrantes et silvas, pruinas, famem, sitimque perferre ab in-

cunabulis adsuescunt. Peregre tecta nisi adigente maxima necessitate non subeunt; nec enim apud eos securos existimant esse sub tectis. 5. Indumentis operiuntur linteis, vel ex pellibus silvestrium murium consarcinatis: nec alia illis domestica vestis est, alia forensis. Sed semel obsoleti coloris tunica collo inserta non ante deponitur aut mutatur, quam diuturna carie in pannulos defluxerit defrustata. 6. Galeris incurvis capita tegunt: hirsuta crura coriis munientes haedinis: eorumque calcei formulis nullis aptati, vetant incedere gressibus liberis. Qua causa ad pedestres parum accommodati sunt pugnas: verum equis prope adfixi, duris quidem, sed deformibus, et muliebriter iisdem nonnumquam insidentes, funguntur muneribus consuetis. Ex ipsis quivis in hac natione pernox et perdius emit et vendit, cibumque sumit et potum, et inclinatus cervici angustae iumenti, in altum soporem adusque varietatem effunditur somniorum. 7. Et deliberatione super rebus proposita seriis, hoc habitu omnes in commune consultant. Aguntur autem nulla severitate regali, sed tumultuario optimatum ductu contenti, perrumpunt, quidquid inciderit. 8. Et pugnant nonnumquam lacessiti, sed ineuntes proelia cuneatim variis vocibus sonantibus torvum. Utque ad pernicitatem sunt leves et repentini; ita subito de industria dispersi vigescunt, et incomposita acie cum caede vasta discurrunt: nec invadentes vallum, nec castra inimica pilantes prae nimia rapiditate cernuntur. 9. Eoque omnium acerrimos facile dixeris bellatores, quod procul missilibus telis, acutis ossibus pro spiculorum acumine arte mira coagmentatis, sed distinctis: cominus ferro sine sui respectu confligunt,

hostesque, dum mucronum noxias observant, contortis laciniis illigant, ut laqueatis resistentium membris equitandi vel gradiendi adimant facultatem 10. Nemo apud eos arat, nec stivam aliquando contingit. Omnes enim sine sedibus fixis, abseque lare vel lege, aut ritu stabili dispalantur, semper fugientium similes: cum carpentis, in quibus habitant: ubi coniuges taetra illis vestimenta contexunt, et coërunt cum maritis, et pariunt, eo adusque pubertatem nutriunt pueros. Nullusque apud eos interrogatus, respondere, unde oritur, potest, alibi conceptus, natusque procul, et longius educatus. 11. Per indutias infidi, inconstantes, ad omnem auram incidentis spei novae perquam mobiles, totum furori incitatissimo tribuentes. Inconsultorum animalium ritu, quid honestum inhonestumve sit, penitus ignorantes: flexiloqui et obscuri, nullus religionis vel superstitionis reverentia aliquando districti: auri cupidine immensa flagrantes: adeo permutabiles, et irasci faciles, ut eodem aliquoties die a sociis nullo irritante saepe desciscant, itidemque propitientur nemine leniente. 12. Hoc expeditum indomitumque hominum genus, externa praedandi aviditate flagrans immani, per rapinas finitimorum grassatum et caedes, adusque Alanos pervenit, veteres Massagetas: qui unde sint, vel quas incolant terras (quoniam huc res prolapsa est) consentaneum est demonstrare, geographica perplexitate monstrata, quae diu multa luda . . ., et varia, tandem reperit veritatis interna . . .* . . .* ad. . . . 13. Hister advenarum magnitudine fluenti Sauromatas praetermeat adusque amnem Tanaim pertinentes, qui Asiam terminat ab Europa. Hoc transito, in immensum extentas Scythiae solitudines Alani

inhabitant, ex montium adpellatione cognominati, paullatimque nationes conterminas crebritate victoriarum attritas ad gentilitatem sui vocabuli traxerunt ut Persae. 14. Inter hos Neuri mediterranea incolunt loca, vicini verticibus celsis, quos praeruptos geluque torpentes aquilones adstringunt. Post quos Budini sunt, et Geloni perquam feri, qui detractis peremptorum hostium cutibus indumenta sibi, equisque termina conficiunt, bellatrix gens. Gelonis Agathyrsi collimitant, interstincti colore caeruleo corpora simul et crines : et humiles quidem minutis atque raris, nobiles vero latis, fucatis et densioribus notis. 15. Post hos Melanchlaenas et Anthropophagos palari accepimus per diversa, humanis corporibus victitantes : quibus ob haec alimenta nefanda desertis, finitimi omnes longa petiere terrarum. Ideoque plaga omnis Orienti aestivo obiecta, usque dum venitur ad Seras, inhabitabilis mansit. 16. Parte alia prope Amazonum sedes Alani sunt Orienti acclines, diffusi per populosas gentes et amplas, Asiaticos vergentes in tractus, quas dilatari adusque Gangen accepi fluvium, intersecantem terras Indorum, mareque inundantem australe.

17. Ibi partiti per utramque mundi plagam Alani (quorum gentes varias nunc recensere non refert) licet dirempti spatiis longis, per pagos, ut Nomades, vagantur immensos : aevi tamen progressu ad unum concessere vocabulum, et summatim omnes Alani cognominantur mores et media et efferatam vivendi, sed iam immaturam. 18. Nec enim ulla sunt illisce tuguria, aut versandi vomeris cura, sed carne et copia victitant lactis, plaustris supersidentes, quae operimentis curvatis corticum per solitudines

conferunt sine fine distentas. Cumque ad graminea venerint, in orbiculatam figuram locatis sarracis ferino ritu vescuntur: absumptisque pabulis, velut carpentis civitates impositas vehunt, maresque supra cum feminis coëunt, et nascuntur in his et educantur infantes: et habitacula sunt haec illis perpetua; et quocumque ierint, illic genuinum existimant larem. 19. Armenta prae se agentes cum gregibus pascunt: maximeque equini pecoris est eis sollicitior cura. Ibi campi semper herbescunt, intersitis pomiferis locis: atque ideo transeuntes quolibet, nec alimentis nec pabulis indigent: quod efficit humectum solum et crebri fluminum praetermeantium cursus. 20. Omnis igitur aetas et sexus imbellis circa vehicula ipsa versatur, muniisque distringitur mollibus: iuventus vero equitandi usu a prima pueritia coalescens, incedere pedibus existimat vile: et omnes multiplici disciplina prudentes sunt bellatores. Unde etiam Persae, qui sunt originitus Scythae, pugnandi sunt peritissimi.

21. Proceri autem Alani paene sunt omnes et pulchri, crinibus mediocriter flavis, oculorum temperata torvitate terribiles, et armorum levitate veloces, Hunnisque per omnia suppares, verum victu mitiores et cultu: latrocinando et venando adusque Maeotica stagna et Cimmerium Bosporon, itidemque Armenios discurrentes et Mediam. 22. Utque hominibus quietis et placidis otium est voluptabile; ita illos pericula iuvant et bella. Iudicatur ibi beatus, qui in proelio profuderit animam: senescentes enim et fortuitis mortibus mundo digressos, ut degeneres et ignavos conviciis atrocibus insectantur: nec quidquam est, quod elatius iactent, quam homine quo-

libet occiso; proque exuviis gloriosis, interfectorum avulsis capitibus detractas pelles pro phaleris iumentis accommodant bellatoriis. 23. Nec templum apud eos visitur, aut delubrum, ne tugurium quidem culmo tectum cerni usquam potest: sed gladius barbarico ritu humi figitur nudus, eumque ut Martem, regionum, quas circumcircant, praesulem verecundius colunt. 24. Futura miro praesagiunt modo: nam rectiores virgas vimineas colligentes, easque cum incantamentis quibusdam secretis praestituto tempore discernentes, aperte, quid protendatur, norunt. 25. Servitus quid sic ignorabant, omnes generoso semine procreati: iudicesque etiam nunc eligunt, diuturno bellandi usu spectatos. Sed ad reliqua textus propositi revertamur.

II

EX HISTORIA BYZANTINA PRISCI RHETORIS ET SOPHISTAE

Excerpta de Legationibus Gentium ad Romanos.

(Niebuhr. Bonn. 1829.)

1. Scythae, quo tempore mercatus Scytharum et Romanorum frequenti multitudine celebrabatur, Romanos cum exercitu sunt adorti, et multos occiderunt. Romani ad Scythas miserunt, qui de praesidii expugnatione et foederum contemptu cum eis expostularent. Hi vero se non ultro bellum inferentes, sed factas iniurias ulciscentes, haec fecisse responderunt. Margi enim episcopum in suos fines transgressum, fiscum regium et reconditos thesauros indagatum expilasse. Hunc nisi dederent una cum transfugis, ut foederibus convenerit, (esse enim apud eos plures,) bellum illaturos. Quae cum Romani vera esse negarent, barbari vero in eorum, quae dicebant, fide perstarent, iudicium quidem de his, quae in contentione posita erant, subire minime voluerunt, sed ad bellum conversi sunt. Itaque transmisso Istro, oppidis et castellis ad ripam sitis plurima damna intulerunt, et inter cetera Viminacium, quae Moesorum urbs est in Illyrico, ceperunt. His gestis, cum multi in sermonibus dictitarent, episcopum dedi oportere, ne unius hominis causa universa Romanorum

respublica belli periculum sustineret : ille se deditum iri suspicatus, clam omnibus civitatem incolentibus ad hostes effugit, et urbem traditurum, si sibi Scytharum reges liberalitate sua consulerent, pollicitus est. Ad ea cum beneficium omni ratione se repensuros promitterent, si rem ad exitum perduceret, datis dextris et dictis iureiurando utrinque praestito firmatis, ille cum magna barbarorum multitudine in fines Romanorum est reversus. Eam multitudinem cum ex adverso ripae in insidiis collocasset, nocte dato signo exsiliit, et urbem in manus hostium traduxit. Et ab eo tempore barbarorum res in diem auctiores melioresque fuerunt.

2. Sub Theodosio Iuniore Imperatore Attilas Hunnorum rex delectum ex suis habuit, et litteras ad Imperatorem scripsit de transfugis et de tributis, ut, quaecumque occasione huius belli reddita non essent, quam citissime ad se mitterentur, de tributis autem in posterum pendendis legati secum acturi ad se venirent : nam si cunctarentur aut bellum pararent, ne se ipsum quidem Scytharum multitudinem diutius contenturum. His litteris lectis, Imperator nequaquam Scythas, qui ad se confugissent, traditurum dixit, sed una cum illis in animo sibi esse, belli eventum exspectare. Ceterum se legatos missurum qui controversias dirimerent. Ea sicuti Romani decreverant, ubi Attilas rescivit, ira commotus Romanorum fines vastavit, et castellis quibusdam dirutis, in Ratiariam urbem magnam et populi multitudine abundantem irruptionem, fecit.

3. Post pugnam in Chersoneso commissam Romani cum Hunnis pacem per Anatolium legatum fecerunt, et in has conditiones convenerunt : profugos Hunnis

reddi, sex millia auri librarum pro praeteritis stipendiis solvi; duo millia et centum in posterum singulis annis tributi nomine pendi. Pro unoquoque captivo Romano, qui in Romanorum fines, non soluto redemptionis pretio, evasisset, duodecim aureorum mulctam inferri. Quae si non solveretur, qui captivum recepisset, restituere teneri. Romanos neminem ex barbaris ad se confugientem admittere. In has quidem foederum leges Romani sponte consensisse videri volebant: sed necessitate coacti, superante metu, qui Romanorum ducum mentes occupaverat, quantumvis duras et iniquas conditiones sibi impositas summo pacis consequendae studio ducti lubentibus animis susceperunt, et gravissimum tributum pendere non recusabant, quamquam opes imperii et regii thesauri non ad necessarios usus, sed in absurda spectacula, in vanos honorum ambitus, in immodicas voluptates et largitiones consumptae fuerant, quales nemo sanae mentis vel in maxime affluentibus divitiarum copiis sustineret, nedum Romani isti, qui rei militaris studium adeo neglexerant, ut non solum Scythis, sed et reliquis barbaris, qui proximas imperii Romani regiones incolebant, vectigales facti essent. Itaque tributa et pecunias, quas ad Hunnos deferri oportebat, Imperator omnes conferre coegit: nulla etiam eorum immunitatis habita ratione, qui terrae onere, tanquam nimis gravi ad tempus, sive Imperatorum benignitate, seu iudicum sententia, levati erant. Conferebant etiam aurum indictum qui in Senatum ascripti erant, ultra quam facultates ferre poterant, et multis splendida et illustris fortuna vitae commutationem attulit. Conficiebantur enim pecunias, quae uni-

cuique imperatae erant, cum acerbitate et contumelia ab iis, quibus huius rei cura ab Imperatore erat demandata. Ex quo, qui a maioribus acceptas divitias possidebant, ornamenta uxorum et pretiosam suam supellectilem in foro venum exponebant. Ab hoc bello tam atrox et acerba calamitas Romanos excepit, ut multi aut abstinentia cibi, aut aptato collo laqueo vitam finierint. Tunc igitur, parvo temporis momento exhaustis thesauris, aurum et exules (nam Scotta, qui susciperet, advenerat,) ad Scythas missi sunt. Romani vero multos ex profugis, qui dedi reluctabantur, trucidarunt, inter quos aliqui fuerunt e regiis Scythis, qui militare sub Attila renuerant et Romanis se adiunxerant. Praeter has pacis conditiones Attilas Asimuntiis quoque imperavit, ut captivos, quos penes se habebant, sive Romanos, sive barbaros, redderent. Est autem Asimus oppidum validum, non multum ab Illyrico distans, quod parti Thraciae adiacet, cuius incolae gravibus damnis hostes affecerunt. Non illi quidem se murorum ambitu tuebantur, sed extra propugnacula certamina sustinebant contra infinitam Scytharum multitudinem et duces magni apud eos nominis et existimationis. Itaque Hunni omissa spe ab oppugnando oppido destiterunt. Illi autem vagantes et a suis longius aberrantes, si quando hostes exisse et praedas ex Romanis egisse, exploratores denuntiabant, inopinantes aggressi parta ab eis spolia sibi vindicabant, numero quidem inferiores adversariis, sed robore et virtute praestantes. Itaque Asimuntii plurimos ex Scythis in hoc bello necaverunt, et multos Romanorum in libertatem asseruerunt, et hostium transfugas receperunt. Quamo-

brem Attilas, se exercitum non ante moturum, aut foederis conditiones ratas habiturum professus est, quam Romani, qui ad Asimuntios pervenissent, redderentur, aut pro his mulcta conventa solveretur, et liberarentur abducti in servitutem barbari. Quum, quae contra ea dissereret, non haberet Anatolius legatus, neque Theodulus, praesidiariorum Thraciae militum dux, (nihil enim rationibus suis barbarum movebant, qui recenti victoria elatus, promte ad arma ferebatur, ipsi contra propter recens acceptam cladem animis ceciderant,) Asimuntiis per litteras significarunt, ut Romanos captivos, qui ad se perfugissent, restituerent, aut pro unoquoque captivo duodecim aureos penderent, et Hunnos captivos liberarent. Quibus litteris lectis, Romanos, qui ad se confugissent, liberos se abire sivisse, Scythas vero, quotquot in suas manus venissent, trucidasse responderunt. Duos autem captivos retinere, propterea quod hostes, obsidione omissa, in insidiis collocati, nonnullos pueros, qui ante munitiones greges pascebant, rapuissent, quos nisi reciperent, captivos iure belli sibi acquisitos, minime restituros. Haec renuntiarunt qui ad Asimuntios missi fuerant. Quibus auditis, Scytharum regi et Romanis principibus placuit exquiri pueros, quos Asimuntii raptos esse querebantur. Sed nemine reperto, barbari ab Asimuntiis capti sunt dimissi, prius tamen fide a Scythis accepta, non esse apud ipsos pueros. Iuraverunt etiam Asimuntii, se Romanos, qui ad se effugissent, libertate donasse, quamvis adhuc multos in sua potestate haberent. Nec enim sibi perierasse videbantur, modo suos a barbarorum servitute salvos et incolumes praestarent.

4. Pace facta, Attilas rursus legatos ad Romanos Orientales mittit, qui transfugas repeterent. At illi legatos plurimis donis ornatos, cum nullos perfugas apud se esse asseverassent, dimiserunt. Misit et iterum Attilas alios, quibus non minus amplis muneribus ditatis, tertia ab eo, post illam itidem quarta legatio advenit. Ille enim Romanorum liberalitatem, qua utebantur, veriti, ne a foederibus barbari discederent, ludibrio habens, novas subinde causas fingebat, et vanas occasiones legatorum mittendorum excogitabat, et ad suos necessarios, quos liberalitate ornare volebat, eas legationes deferebat. Romani vero in omnibus rebus Attilae dicto audientes erant, et quae praecipiebat, domini iussa ducebant. Non solum enim a bello contra eum suscipiendo eorum rationes abhorrebant, sed et Parthos, qui bellum apparabant, et Vandalos, qui maritimas oras vexabant, et Isauros, qui praedis et rapinis grassabantur, et Saracenos, qui regiones ad Orientem excursionibus vastabant, metuebant. Praeterea gentes Aethiopum in armis erant. Itaque Romani animis fracti Attilam colebant, sed ceteris gentibus resistere conabantur, dum exercitus comparabant, et duces sortiebantur.

5. Edecon, vir Scytha, qui maximas res in bello gesserat, venit iterum legatus cum Oreste. Hic genere Romanus Paeoniam regionem, ad Saum flumen sitam, incolebat, quae ex foedere inito cum Aetio, Romanorum Occidentalium duce, barbaro parebat. Itaque Edecon in palatium admissus, Imperatori litteras Attilae tradidit, in quibus de transfugis non redditis querabatur, qui nisi redderentur, et Romani a colenda terra abstinerent, quam bello captam suae

ditioni adiecerat, ad arma se iturum minabatur. Ea vero secundum Istrum a Paeonibus ad Novas usque in Thracia sitas in longitudinem extendebatur. Latitudo autem erat quinque dierum itinere. Neque vero forum celebrari, ut olim, ad ripam Istri volebat, sed in Naisso, quam urbem a se captam et dirutam quinque dierum itinere expedito homini ab Istro distantem, Scytharum et Romanorum ditionis limitem constituebat. Legatos quoque ad se venire iussit controversa disceptaturos, non ex quolibet hominum genere et ordine, sed ex consularibus illustriores, quos si mittere intermiserint, se ipsum ad eos arcessendos in Sardicam descensurum. His litteris lectis, digresso ab Imperatore Edecone, cum Bigila, qui ea, quae Attilas verbis Imperatori denuntiari voluit, interpretatus erat, cum reliquas quoque domos obiret, ut in conspectum Chrysaphii spatharii Imperat. Veniret, qui plurimum auctoritate et gratia apud Imperatorem valebat, admirabatur barbarus regiarum domuum magnificentiam. Bigilas autem, simulatque barbarus in colloquium venit cum Chrysaphio, interpretans retulit, quantopere laudasset Imperatorias aedes, et Romanos beatos duceret propter affluentes divitiarum copias. Tum Edeconi Chrysaphius dixit, fore eum huiusmodi domuum, quae aureis tectis praefulgerent, compotem et opibus abundaturum, si, relicta Scythia, ad Romanos se conferret. "Sed alterius domini servum, Edecon ait, nefas est eo invito tantum facinus in se admittere." Quaesivit ex eo eunuchus, an facilis illi ad Attilam pateret aditus, et num qua potestate apud Scythas esset. Ille sibi necessitudinem intercedere cum Attila, respondit, et decretam sibi cum nonnullis aliis Scythiae primoribus eius cus-

todiam. Nam per vices unumquemque eorum praescriptis diebus cum armis circa Attilam excubias agere. Tum eunuchus, si fide interposita se obstringeret, inquit, se maximorum bonorum illi auctorem futurum. Cui rei tractandae otio opus esse. Hoc vero sibi fore, si ad coenam rediret sine Oreste et reliquis legationis comitibus. Facturum se pollicitus barbarus coenae tempore ad eunuchum pergit. Tum per Bigilam interpretem datis dextris et iureiurando utrimque praestito, ab eunucho, se de rebus, quae Edeconi minime damno, sed fructui et commodo essent, verba facturum, ab Edecone, se, quae sibi crederentur, non enuntiaturum, etiamsi exsequi nollet. Tunc eunuchus Edeconi dixit, si in Scythiam rediens Attilam sustulerit, et Romanorum partibus accesserit, vitam in magnis opibus beate traducturum. Eunucho Edecon assensus est. Ad hanc rem peragendam opus esse pecuniis, non quidem multis, sed quinquaginta auri libris, quas militibus, quibus praeesset, qui sibi ad rem impigre exsequendam adiumento essent, divideret. Cum eunuchus, nulla mora interposita, dare vellet, dixit barbarus, se prius ad renuntiandam legationem dimitti oportere, et una secum Bigilam, qui Attilae de transfugis responsum acciperet; per eum enim se illi, qua ratione aurum sibi mitteret, indicaturum. Etenim Attilam se, simulatque redierit, percunctaturum, ut reliquos omnes, quae munera sibi et quantae pecuniae a Romanis dono datae sint. Neque id celare per collegas et comites licitum fore. Visus est eunucho barbarus recta sentire, et eius est amplexus sententiam. Itaque eo a coena dimisso, ad Imperatorem consilium initum detulit, qui Martialium,

magistri officiorum munere fungentem, ad se venire iussum docuit conventionem cum barbaro factam: id enim illi credi et committi iure magistratus, quem gerebat, necesse fuit. Nam omnium Imperatoris consiliorum magister est particeps, sub cuius cura sunt tabellarii, interpretes et milites, qui palatii custodiae deputati sunt. Imperatore autum et Martialio de tota re consultantibus placuit, non solum Bigilam, sed et Maximinum legatum mittere ad Attilam.

6. Bigila insidiarum in Attilam manifeste convicto, Attilas, ablatis ab eo centum auri libris, quas a Chrysaphio acceperat, extemplo Orestem et Eslam Constantinopolim misit, iussitque Orestem, crumena, in quam Bigilas aurum, quod Edeconi daretur, coniecerat, collo imposita, in conspectum Imperatoris venire atque eunuchum interrogare, num hanc crumenam nosset; deinde Eslam haec verba proferre, Theodosium quidem clari patris et nobilis esse filium, Attilam quoque nobilis parentis esse stirpem, et patrem eius Mundiuchum acceptam a patre nobilitatem integram conservasse. Sed Theodosium tradita a patre nobilitate excidisse, quod tributum sibi pendendo suus servus esset factus. Non igitur iustam rem facere eum, qui praestantiori et ei, quem fortuna dominum ipsi dederit, tanquam servus improbus clandestinas paret. Neque se prius criminari illum eo nomine destiturum, quam eunuchus ad supplicium sit traditus. Atque hi quidem cum his mandatis Constantinopolim pervenerunt. Eodem quoque tempore accidit, ut Chrysaphius a Zenone ad poenam deposceretur. Maximinus enim renuntiaverat, Attilam dicere, decere Imperatorem promissis stare, et Constantio uxorem, quam promiserit, dare,

hanc enim, invito Imperatore, nemini fas fuisse desponderi: aut enim eum, qui contra ausus fuisset, poenas daturum fuisse, aut eo Imperatoris res deductas esse, ut ne servos quidem suos coercere posset, contra quos, si vellet, se auxilium ferre paratum. Sed Theodosius, iracundiam suam palam fecit, cum bona puellae in publicum redegit.

7. Cum primum Attilae nuntiatum est, Martianum post Theodosii mortem ad imperium pervenisse, et quae Honoriae accidissent, ad eum, qui in Occidente rerum potiebatur, misit, qui contenderent, Honoriam nihil se indignum admisisse, quam matrimonio suo destinasset; seque illi auxilium laturum, nisi summa quoque imperii ei deferretur. Misit et ad Romanos Orientales tributorum constitutorum gratia. Sed re infecta legati utrimque sunt reversi. Etenim qui Occidentis imperio praeerat, respondit, Honoriam illi nubere non posse, quod iam alii nupsisset. Neque imperium Honoriae deberi. Virorum enim, non mulierum, Romanum imperium esse. Qui in Oriente imperabat, se minime ratam habere tributi illationem, quam Theodosius consensisset: quiescenti munera largiturum; bellum minanti viros et arma obiecturum ipsius opibus non inferiora. Itaque Attilas in varias distrahebatur sententias, et illi in dubio haerebat animus, quos primum aggrederetur. Tandem melius visum est ad periculosius bellum prius sese convertere, et in Occidentem exercitum educere. Illic enim sibi rem fore non solum cum Italis, sed etiam cum Gothis et Francis: cum Italis, ut Honoriam cum ingentibus divitiis secum abduceret: cum Gothis, ut Genserichi gratiam promereretur.

8. Et Francos quidem bello lacessendi illi causa

fuit regum ipsorum obitus et de regno inter liberos controversia, quum maior natu Attilam auxilio vocasset, Aëtium minor, quem Romae vidimus legationem obeuntem, nondum lanugine efflorecente, flava coma, et capillis propter densitatem et magnitudinem super humeros effusis. Hunc etiam Aëtius filii loco adoptaverat, et plurimis donis ornatum ad Imperatorem, ut amicitiam et societatem cum eo faceret, miserat. Quamobrem Attilas antequam in eam expeditionem ingrederetur, rursus legatos in Italiam misit, qui Honoriam poscerent: eam enim secum matrimonium pepigisse: cuius rei ut fidem faceret, annulum ab ea ad se missum per legatos, quibus tradiderat, exhiberi mandavit. Etiam dimidiam imperii partem sibi Valentinianum debere, quum ad Honoriam iure paternum regnum pertineret, quo iniusta fratris cupiditate privata esset. Sed quum Romani Occidentales in prima sententia persisterent et Attilae mandata reciicerent, ipse toto exercitu convocato maiore vi bellum paravit.

9. Attilas, vastata Italia, ad sua se retulit, et Romanorum Imperatoribus in Oriente bellum et populationem denuntiavit, propterea quod tributum sibi a Theodosio constitutum non solveretur.

EX HISTORIA GOTHICA PRISCI RHETORIS ET SOPHISTAE

Excerpta de Legationibus Romanorum ad Gentes.

(Niebuhr. Bonn. 1829.)

1. Cum Rua, Hunnorum rex, statuisset cum Amalsuris, Itimaris, Tonosuribus, Boiscis ceterisque gentibus, quae Istrum accolunt, quod ad armorum societatem cum Romanis iungendam confugissent, bello decertare, Eslam componendis Romanorum et Hunnorum controversiis adhiberi solitum misit, qui Romanis denuntiaret, se a foedere, quod sibi cum illis esset, recessurum, nisi omnes Scythas, qui ad eos se contulissent, redderent. Romanis vero consilium de mittendis ad Hunnos legatis capientibus, Plinthas et Dionysius, hic ex Thracia, ille ex Scythia oriundus, ambo exercituum duces, et qui consulatus dignitatem apud Romanos gesserant, hanc legationem obire voluerunt. Ut vero visum est non ante legatos proficisci, quam Eslas ad Ruam rediisset, Plinthas una cum Esla misit Singulachum, unum ex suis necessariis, qui Ruae persuaderet cum nullo alio Romanorum, quam cum ipso, colloquium inire. Cum autem, Rua mortuo, Hunnorum regnum ad Attilam pervenisset, Senatus decrevit Plintham legationem ad Attilam exsequi. Quo S.C. Imperatrois suffragio comprobato, Plintham cupido incessit, Epigenem, qui sapientiae laude celebris erat et quaesturae dignitatem obtinebat, socium legationis

sibi adsciscere. Qua de re lato quoque suffragio ambo in eam legationem profecti sunt, et Margum pervenerunt. Est autem Margus urbs in Illyrico Mysorum ad Istrum sita, ex adverso Constantiae arcis, ad alteram fluminis ripam collocatae, quo et regii Scythae convenerant. Extra civitatem equis insidentes utrique congressi sunt. Nec enim barbaris de plano verba facere placuit, et legati Romani suae dignitatis memores eodem quoque apparatu in Scytharum conspectum venire statuerunt, ne sibi peditibus cum equitibus disserendum foret. Itaque placuit, profugos omnes, etiam qui multo ante profugerant, una cum captivis Romanis, qui non soluto redemtionis pretio ad sua redierant, dedi: aut pro unoquoque captivo Romano his, qui eum bello ceperant, octo aureos dari, Romanos belli societatem cum barbara gente, quae bellum cum Hunnis gerat, non facere. Conventus ad mercatus paribus legibus celebrari, et in tuto Romanos et Hunnos esse. Foedera rata manere et observari, si quoque anno septingentae auri librae tributi nomine Scythis regiis a Romanis penderentur, cum antea tributum annuum non fuisset nisi trecentarum quinquaginta librarum. His conditionibus pacem Romani et Hunni pepigerunt, qua iureiurando patrio ritu utrimque praestito firmata, utrique ad sua redierunt. Itaque qui ex barbaris ad Romanos transierant redditi sunt, de quorum numero erant filii Mama et Attacam ex regio genere, quos Scythae receptos in Carso, Thraciae castello, crucis supplicio affecerunt, et hanc ab his fugae poenam exegerunt. Pace cum Romanis facta, Attilas et Bleda ad subigendas gentes Scythicas profecti sunt, et contra Sorosgos bellum moverunt.

2. Theodosius misit Senatorem, virum consularem, ad Attilam legationem obiturum. Et ille quidem quamvis legati nomen adeptus esset, minime tamen est ausus terrestri itinere Hunnos adire : sed iter per Pontum Euxinum instituit, et in Odessenorum civitatem navigavit, in qua Theodulus dux commorabatur.

3. Chrysaphius eunuchus suasit Edeconi Attilam de medio tollere. Super ea re, habito ab Imperatore Theodosio cum Martialio magistro consilio, decreverunt non solum Bigilam, sed et Maximinum legatum ad Attilam ire, et Bigilam quidem specie interpretis, quo munere fungebatur, quae Edeconi viderentur, exsecuturum, Maximinum vero, qui minime eorum, quae in consilio Imperatoris agitata erant, conscius esset, litteras ab eo Attilae redditurum. Scripserat enim Imperator legatorum causa, Bigilam interpretis munus obiturum, et Maximinum legatum mitti, qui quidem Bigilam dignitate superaret, et genere illustris et sibi valde familiaris esset. Ad haec minime decere Attilam foedera transgredientem Romanorum regionem invadere. Et antea quidem ad eum plures, nunc vero decem et septem transfugas mittere. Nec enim plures apud se esse. Et haec quidem litteris continebantur. Coram autem Maximinum suis verbis iusserat Attilae dicere, ne postularet maioris dignitatis viros ad se legatos transire. Hoc enim neque ipsius maioribus datum esse, nequc ceteris Scythiae regibus, sed quemlibet militem aut alium nuntium legationis munus obiisse. Ceterum ad ea, quae inter ipsos in dubietate versabantur, diiudicanda sibi videri, Onegesium mitti debere. Qui enim fieri posset, ut in Serdicam, quae diruta esset, Attilas cum viro, consulari conveniret ? In hac legatione Maximinus

precibus mihi persuasit, ut illi comes essem. Atque ita cum barbaris iter facere coepimus, et in Serdicam pervenimus trium et decem dierum itinere expedito homini a Constantinopoli distantem. Ibi commorantes ad cibum nobiscum sumendum Edecona et ceteros barbaros invitandos duximus. Bobus igitur et ovibus, quas incolae nobis suppeditaverant, iugulatis, instructo convivio epulati sumus. Inter epulas barbari Attilam, nos Imperatorem admirari et extollere. Ad quae Bigilas dixit, minime iustum esse, deum cum homine comparare, hominem Attilam, deum Theodosium vocans. Id aegre tulerunt Hunni, et sensim ira accensi exasperabantur. Nos vero alio sermonem detorquere, et eorum iram blandis verbis lenire. A coena ut surreximus, Maximinus Edeconem et Orestem donis conciliaturus, sericis vestibus et gemmis Indicis donavit. Orestes deinde praestolatus Edeconis discessum verba faciens cum Maximino, sibi quidem, ait, illum probum et prudentem videri, qui non ut alii ministri regii peccasset. Etenim nonnulli, spreto Oreste, Edeconem ad coenam invitaverant et donis coluerant. Nos autem harum omnium rerum ignari, quo pertinerent Orestis verba, non satis percipientes, cum ex eo sciscitaremur, quomodo et qua in re despectui esset habitus et Edecon honore affectus, nihil respondit, et discessit. Postridie cum iter faceremus, Bigilae, quae Orestes dixerat, retulimus. Ille vero ait, Orestem non debere iniquo animo ferre, si eadem, quae Edecon, minime esset consecutus. Orestem enim comitem et scribam Attilae, Edeconem vero bello clarissimum, ut in gente Humnorum, longe illum dignitate antecellere. Quae cum loqueretur,

patrio sermone Edeconem affatus, non multo post nobis confirmavit, seu vera proferret, seu fingeret, se Edeconi ea, quae prius illi dixeramus, exposuisse, et aegre iram eius ob dicta Orestis lenivisse. Venimus Naissum, quae ab hostibus fuerat eversa et solo aequata: itaque eam desertam hominibus offendimus, praeterquam quod in ruderibus sacrarum aedium erant quidam aegroti. Paulo longius a flumine ad vacua lota divertentes (omnia enim circa ripam erant plena ossibus eorum, qui bello ceciderant), postridie ad Agintheum, copiarum in Illyrico ducem, qui non longe a Naisso habitabat, accessimus, ut, traditis Imperatoris mandatis, reciperemus ab eo quinque transfugas, qui septemdecim numerum, de quibus ad Attilam scripserat, explerent. Hominem igitur convenimus, et quinque profugos Hunnos tradere praecepimus, quos verbis consolatus, nobiscum dimisit. Nocte transacta, a montibus Naissi Istrum versus pergentes, in angustam convallem per obliquos flexus et circuitus multos deferimur. Hic cum in ea opinione essemus, ut in occasum iter tendere existimaremus, simulataque illuxit, sol exoriens sese ex adverso oculis nostris obiecit. Itaque qui loci situm ignorabant, exclamare, tanquam sol contrarium solito cursum conficeret, et abhorrentia a constituto rerum ordine designaret: sed propter loci inaequalitatem via ea parte ad Orientem spectat. Ex illo difficili et arduo loco ad plana et uliginosa devenimus. Hic nos barbari portitores in scaphis unico ligno constantibus, quas arboribus sectis et cavatis adornant, exceperunt, et flumen transmiserunt. Et lembi quidem minime ad nos traducendos, sed ad multitudinem barbarorum

traiiciendam erant praeparati, quae nobis in via occurreret, quia Attilas ad venationem in Romanorum fines transgredi volebat. Revera autem bellum contra Romanos paravit, cuius gerendi occasionem sumebat, quod transfugae non redderentur. Transmisso Istro, septuaginta fere stadiorum iter cum barbaris emensi in campo quodam subsistere coacti sumus, tantisper dum Edecon Attilam nostri adventus certiorem faceret, manentibus interea nobiscum ex barbaris, qui nos erant deducturi. Circa vesperam nobis coenantibus, auditus est strepitus equorum ad nos venientium. Et duo viri Scythae advenerunt, qui nos ad Attilam venire iusserunt. Nobis vero prius eos ad coenam accedere rogantibus, de equis descendentes una convivium inierunt, et postridie viam praeeuntes demonstrarunt. Qua die hora fere nona ad Attilae tentoria pervenimus : nam erant ei plurima. Et cum in colle quodam tentoria figere vellemus, obvii barbari prohibuerunt, quoniam Attilae tentorium esset in planitie positum. Quamobrem ad barbarorum arbitrium locum tentorii collocandi cepimus. Huc Edecon, Orestes, Scotta et alii ex Scythis primores mox advenerunt, et ex nobis quaesierunt, quarum rerum consequendarum gratia hanc legationem suscepissemus. Nos vero invicem intueri, et tam ineptam percunctationem admirari. Illi nihilominus perseverare, et nobis, ut responderemus, instabant. At quum soli Attilae, non aliis Imperatorem mandata exponere iussisse respondissemus, Scotta offensus, hoc sibi a suo duce praeceptum esse dixit, neque sua sponte se ad nos venisse. Nos vero obtestari, nusquam hanc legem legatis impositam, ut per alios mandata edant et palam faciant,

antequam eos, ad quos missi sint, adierint, et in conspectum eorum venerint. Neque hoc Scythas nescire, qui saepenumero legatos ad Imperatorem miserint. Idem et nobis contingere par esse, neque aliter nos mandata esse dicturos. Quibus auditis ad Attilam perrexerunt, unde non multo post sine Edecone reversi, omnia, quae cum illis agere in mandatis habebamus, dixerunt, confestimque, nisi quid aliud nobis cum illis rei esset, discedere iusserunt. Quae ubi audivimus, animis dubii suspensisque haesimus. Nec enim satis intelligere poteramus, qua ratione occulta Imperatoris consilia patefacta essent. Quamobrem potius esse duximus, nihil quicquam de mandatis nostris efferre, priusquam nobis Attilam adeundi potestas fieret: itaque respondimus: "Sive ea, quae Scythae modo protulerunt, sive alia nuntiaturi venerimus, neminem nisi ducem vestrum quaerere decet, neque de his cum aliis ullo pacto disserere constituimus." Ille vero nos quam primum abire iusserunt. Dum reditum parabamus, Bigilas nos propter responsionem Scythis factam increpavit. Longe enim potius fuisse in mendacio deprehendi, quam re infecta domum reverti. "Si enim, inquit, cum Attila collocutus fuissem, facile illi a contentione cum Romanis discedere persuasissem, quippe qui antea familiaritatem cum illo in legatione cum Anatolio suscepta contraxi." Atque inde Edeconem quoque bene sibi velle dixit, ideoque specie legationis et eorum, quae vere aut falso dicturi essent, ope viam se inventuros esse speravit, qua compositas in Attilam insidias exsequerentur, et aurum, quo Edecon sibi ad eam rem opus esse eunucho dixerat, adferretur, quod certis hominibus

divideretur. Sed Bigilam latebat, se proditum: Edecon enim, sive simulate cum Eunucho pactus, sive ut ab Oreste sibi caveret, ne ob eam causam, quam in Serdica inter coenandum nobis indicaverat, iratus ad Attilam deferret, quod sine se secretos sermones cum Imperatore et eunucho habuisset, Attilae comparatam in ipsum coniurationem aperuit, et auri summam, quam in eam rem mitti convenerat, simul et ea, quae per nos in ista legatione tractanda erant, enuntiavit. Iumentis iam adornatis et necessitate ad iter tempore noctis carpendum adacti, occurrere ex barbaris, qui dicerent, Attilam iubere nos propter tempus noctis intempestivum remanere. In eundem igitur locum, unde proficiscebamur, praesto fuere, qui bovem agebant et pisces fluviatiles nobis ab Attila missos adferebant. Coenati nos dormitum contulimus. Luce orta in spem adducebamur, Attilam se ad lenitatem daturum, et aliquod mite responsum ad nos ab ipso emanaturum. Ille vero denuo eosdem misit, iussitque abire, si nihil aliud negotii, nisi quod iam omnibus cognitum erat, nobis cum illo intercederet. Nullo dato responso ad iter nos accinximus, etsi Bigilas omni ope contenderet, ut responderemus nos alia dicenda habere. Ego vero cum Maximinum moerore confici viderem, assumto Rusticio, qui barbarorum linguae peritus erat, et nobiscum in Scythiam venerat non legationis, sed privatae rei causa, ad Constantium ex Italia oriundum, quem ad Attilam Aëtius, Occidentalium Romanorum dux, ut illi ab epistolis esset, miserat, Scottam adii, (nec enim aderat Onegesius,) et cum illo per Rusticium interpretem collocutus, eum plurima dona a Maximino laturum dixi, si illi aditus ad Attilam copiam faceret.

Legatum enim venire de rebus, quae non solum Romanis et Hunnis maximam essent utilitatem allaturae, sed etiam ipsi Onegesio. Imperatorem enim poscere, illum ad se legatum ab Attila mitti, qui diiudicaret controversias inter utramque gentem, unde nonnisi ingentibus donis cumulatus esset rediturus. Oportere igitur illum, cum Onegesius non adsit, in tam praeclara actione nos aut potius fratrem ipsum adiuvare. Et ipsi quoque Attilam plurimum fidere dixi me accepisse. Sed non satis firma esse audita, nisi re ipsa notum faceret quantum illi Attila tribueret. Atque ille: "Ne amplius, inquit, dubii sitis. Aeque ac frater apud Attilam valeo auctoritate, seu verbis, seu facto opus est." Et ascenso equo, ad Attilae tentorium contendit. Ego vero ad Maximinum rediens, qui una cum Bigila angebatur animo, et incertus erat quid constituendum esset, narravi sermones, quos habueram cum Scotta, et quae ab ipso audieram. Atque adeo illum excitavi ad praeparanda munera, quibus Scottam remuneraretur, et praemeditandum, quibus verbis Attilam affaretur. Surrexerunt igitur (offenderam enim illos in solo herbido iacentes), et operam a me egregie navatam laudarunt, et eos, qui se iam cum iumentis itineri accinxerant, revocarunt. Tum etiam qua oratione Attilam aggrederentur, et quo modo dona Imperatoris, et quae Maximinus ipse adferebat, traderent, inter se agitarunt. Dum in harum rerum cura versabamur, Attilas nos per Scottam arcessivit: itaque ad eius tentorium iter direximus, quod barbarorum multitudine, qui in orbem excubias agebant, erat circumdatum. Introducti Attilam sedentem in sella lignea invenimus. Stetimus paulo remotius ab eius solio:

mox processit Maximinus et salutavit barbarum. Et Imperatoris litteras tradens dixit, salvum et incolumem illum suosque precari Imperatorem. Et barbarus, "Sit et Romanis quemadmodum et mihi cupiunt," inquit. Statimque ad Bigilam convertit orationem, feram impudentem vocans, quaerbat, qua re impulsus ad ipsum venisset, cum sibi eorum, quae et ipse et Anatolius de pace sensissent, conscius esset: non enim prius ad se legatos accedere debuisse, quam omnes profugi, qui apud Romanos exstarent, redditi essent. Bigila vero respondente, nullum amplius apud Romanos reperiri transfugam Scythici generis; omnes enim redditos esse; magis exasperatus Attilas, in eum multa probra et convitia ingessit. Et cum clamore dixit, se illum in crucem acturum et praedam vulturibus praebiturum fuisse, nisi leges legationis hac impudentis eius orationis et temeritatis poena offendere vereretur. Etenim restare adhuc apud Romanos plures transfugas, quorum nomina, ut erant in charta descripta, iussit scribas recitare. Hi ubi omnia legerant, Attilas Bigilam una cum Esla sine mora proficisci iussit Romanis denuntiatum, ut omnes transfugas Scythicae nationis, quotquot in eorum potestate essent, redderent, a tempore Carpilionis, filii Aëtii, Romanorum Occidentalium ducis, qui obses apud eum fuerat. Non enim se servos suos secum manus conserere passurum esse, quamquam ne iis quidem, qui suae ditionis custodiam illis promiserint, prodesse possint. Quae enim urbs, quod castellum ab illis possit defendi, quod evertere aut diruere apud se constitutum habuerit? Postquam exposuerint a se de transfugis decreta, redire eos quamprimum iussit renuntiatum, utrum

transfugas reddere, an bellum eo nomine malint suscipere. Non multo ante Maximinum paulum exspectare iusserat, dum ad ea, quae Imperator scripserat, per se responsum daret, munera petiit. Quae postquam dedimus, in tentorium nostrum nos recepimus, et de singulis, quae dicta fuerant, inter nos disseruimus. Cum autem Bigilas admiraretur, qui fieret, ut Attilas, qui sibi iampridem, cum legatus ad illum veniret, comis et perhumanus visus esset, tunc se acerbis contumeliis affecisset, dixi, vereri me, ne qui ex barbaris, qui in Serdica nobiscum epulati erant, Attilam infensum nobis reddidissent, et Bigilam Romanorum Imperatorem deum, Attilam vero hominem appellasse, retulissent. Quam orationem Maximinus ut verisimilem est amplexus, quia coniurationis in Attilam ab eunucho initae particeps non fuerat. Sed Bigilas ambiguus animi erat, neque causam suspicari posse videbatur, quare Attilas eum tam acerbis convitiis insectatus esset. Nec enim in animum suum inducere poterat, ut nobis postea retulit, enuntiata fuisse, quae in convivio in Serdica dicta fuerant, nec ceniurationem in Attilam detectam, cum nemo ex omni multitudine, quae Attilam circumstabat, excepto Edecone, prae metu, qui omnium mentes pervaserat, cum Attila sermonem instituere auderet, Edeconem autem studiose operam daturum censeret, omnia silentio transigere, tum propter iusiurandum, tum propter negotii gravitatem: ne, quia clandestinis in Attilam consiliis interfuerat, reus iudicatus, poena mortis afficeretur. Haec cum ambigua mente volveremus, Edecon supervenit, et abducto a nostro coetu Bigila (fingebat enim velle vere et serio de praemeditatis inter eos insidiis agere), ubi aurum adferri praecepit, quod his daretur, qui

exsequendo facinori operam navaturi essent, discessit. Ego vero cum Bigilam curiosius inquirerem, quos sermones secum Edecon habuisset, decipere conatus est, deceptus et ipse, et veram causam occultans commentus est sibi Edeconem dixisse, Attilam illi quoque propter transfugas succensuisse. Oportuisse enim aut omnes restitui, aut legatos summa auctoritate praeditos ad illum venire. Haec dum loquebamur, advenere ab Attila, qui Bigilam et nos prohiberent, captivum Romanum, aut barbarum mancipium, aut equos, aut quicquam aliud emere, praeterquam quae ad victum necessaria erant, donec inter Romanos et Hunnos de rebus controversis convenisset. Haec callide et praemeditato consilio barbarus faciebat, quo facilius Bigilam in consilio contra se exsequendo deprehenderat, cum nullam satis idoneam causam comminisci posset, cur aurum adferret. Nos quoque praetenta causa responsi, quod ad legationem editurus erat, Onegesium opperire coëgit, ut munera, quae ad eum Imperator miserat, et tradere volebamus, acciperet. Etenim tum forte Onegesius una cum seniore ex Attilae liberis ad Acatziros missus fuerat. Ea gens est Scythica, quae in potestatem Attilae hac de causa venit. In eam gentem plures secundum populos et gentes imperium exercebant, quos Imperator Theodosius, firmata inter eos concordia, ab Attilae societate ad colendam cum Romanis pacem et societatem muneribus traducere conatus est. Qui ea munera attulerat non pro cuiusque gentis regis merito et gradu ea distribuerat. Caridachus enim secundo loco acceperat, qui regum antiquior, primus accipere debuerat. Ille, tanquam contemptus et sibi debitis praemiis frustratus, Attilam contra ceteros reges auxilio vocaverat. Is

nihil cunctatus, magno exercitu emisso eorum alios sustulit, alios ad deditionem compulit. Deinde Caridachum ad se vocat, tanquam illi victoriam, et quae ex victoria consecutus fuerat, impertiturus. Sed iste dolum et insidiis suspicatus, difficile et grave esse homini respondit, in dei conspectum venire. Si enim immotis oculis solis orbem intueri nemo potest, quomodo quis sine sensu doloris cum deorum maximo congrediatur? Atque it Caridachus regnum suaque omnia salva sibi et integra conservavit, et reliqua omnis Acatzirorum regio in ius ditionemque Attilae concessit. Ei genti cum seniorem ex filiis regem Attilas constituere decrevisset, ad hanc rem conficiendam Onegesium miserat. Itaque nos exspectare, ut dictum est, iubens, Bigilam cum Esla ad Romanos amandavit, specie quidem transfugarum repetendorum, sed revera, ut aurum Edeconi promissum adferret.

Post Bigilae discessum unum tantum diem in his locis commorati, postridie una cum Attila ad loca magis ad septentrionem vergentia profecti sumus. Haud longum viae spatium cum barbaris progressi, alio iter vertimus, Scythis, qui viam ducebant, nos id facere iubentibus. Attilas interea in quodam vico substitit, in quo filiam Escam uxorem, etsi plures alias haberet. Scytharum legibus id permittentibus, ducere voluit. Illinc facili et aequali via, per planitiem iter fecimus, et in multos fluvios navigabiles incidimus. Quorum post Istrum maximi sunt Drecon dictus, et Tigas, et Tiphisas. Et hos quidem naviculis unico ligno confectis, quas in quotidiano usu habent qui ad flumina habitant, relinquos lembis ex propinquo desumptis, quos barbari curribus imponunt, et

per loca restagnantia important, traiecimus. Congerebantur vero nobis ex vicis commeatus, pro frumento milium, pro vino medus; sic enim locorum incolae vocant. Servi quoque, qui nos comitabantur, milium secum portabant, potionem ex hordeo praebentes, quam camum barbari appellant. Longavia confecta, die ad noctem inclinante, ad paludem quandam, ad quam aquatum (erat enim eius aqua potui apta) proximi vici incolae ibant, tentoria fiximus. Ingens ventus et procella derepente exorta cum tonitru et crebris fulguribus et multo imbre tentorium nostrum disiecit, et omnia nostra utensilia in proximam paludem volvit. Turbinibus in aëre excitatis, et casu, qui contigerat, perterrefacti, locum illum deseruimus, et dissociati, huc illuc palantes, viam unusquisque nostrum, quam sibi commodam duxit, sub tenebris et imbribus est persecutus. Tandem tuguria vici subeuntes, (illuc enim divisis itineribus omnes diverteramus,) convenimus, et ea, quae nobis deerant, cum clamore perquisivimus. Ad quem strepitum Scythae exilientes calamos, quibus ad ignem utuntur, usserunt: et accenso lumine, interrogarunt, quid nobis vellemus, qui tantos clamores ederemus. Barbari, qui nos comitabantur, responderunt, nos tempestate perculsos turbari. Itaque nos liberaliter invitatos hospitio exceperunt, et calamis siccis ignem accenderunt. Vici domina una ex Bledae uxoribus erat. Haec nobis cibaria et mulieres formosas, cum quibus amori indulgeremus (hoc enim apud Scythas honori ducitur,) suppeditavit. Mulieribus pro cibis praebitis gratias egimus, et sub tectis nostris somnum capientes, ab earum consuetudine abstinuimus. Simul atque

illuxit, ad ea, quae ex nostra supellectile desiderabantur, perquirenda curam convertimus. Haec partim in eo loco, ubi pridie consederamus, partim in ripa paludis, partim in ipsa palude reperta recepimus. In his desiccandis totum diem in illo vico (tempestas enim desierat, et clarus sol apparebat,) contrivimus. Deinde curatis equis et reliquis iumentis, reginam salutatum ivimus. Hanc vicissim donis remunerati sumus tribus pateris argenteis, velleribus rubris, pipere Indico, palmulis et variis cupediis, quae omnia a barbaris, ut ignota, magni aestimantur. Nec multo post omnia fausta feliciaque illis hospitalitatis ergo precati, discessimus. Septem dierum itinere emenso, Scythae, qui nos ducebant, in quodam vico nos consistere iusserunt, quia post Attilam, qui hac via proficisceretur, iter nobis faciendum esset. Hic obvios habuimus legatos a Romanis occidentalibus, etiam ad Attilam missos. Erant autem praecipui Romulus Comitis dignitate decoratus et Primutus, Noricae regionis praefectus, et Romanus, militaris ordinis ductor. His aderat Constantius, quem Aëtius ad Attilam, ut illi in conscribendis epistolis deserviret, miserat, et Tatullus, Orestis eius, qui cum Edecone erat, pater, non legationis causa, sed privati officii et familiaritatis ergo. Constantio enim in Italiis agenti magnus cum illis usus intercesserat: Tatullum affinitas movebat. Orestes enim, eius filius, Romuli filiam e Patavione, Norici civitate, uxorem duxerat. Legati autem veniebant, ut Attilam lenirent, qui sibi Sylvanum, Armii mensae Romae praefectum, tradi postulabat, propterea quod pateras aureas a Constantio quodam acceperat. Hic Constantius, ex Galliis Occidentalibus ortus, ad Attilam

et Bledam, ut illis in conscribendis epistolis operam daret, quemadmodum et post illum alter Constantius, missus fuerat. Ille vero, quo tempore Sirmium oppidum, in Paeonia situm, Scythae obsidebant, aurea vasa a civitatis episcopo acceperat, ut ex eorum pretio, si se superstite urbem capi contigisset, quoad satis esset, pro sua libertate solveretur: sin periisset, cives in servitutem abducti redimerentur. Sed Constantius post urbis excidium de pacto illo parum sollicitus. Romam cuiusdam negotii causa profectus, vasa ad Sylvanum detulit, et aurum ab eo accepit, conventique, ut, si intra tempus praefinitum aurum mutuo sumtum redderet, vasa reciperet: ni fecisset, Sylvanus vasa sibi haberet et his pro arbitrio uteretur. Hunc Constantium Attilas et Bleda, cum illis proditionis nomine suspectus esset, in crucem egerunt. Ex quo, ut de poculis aureis iudicium ad Attilam est delatum, sibi tradi Sylvanum, tanquam furem eorum, quae sua essent, flagitavit. Legati igitur ab Aëtio et Romanorum occidentalium Imperatore venerant, qui decerent, Sylvanum Constantii creditorem vasa aurea pro credito oppignerata, non furto ablata, penes se habuisse, quae sacerdotibus, qui primi se obtulissent, nummis argenteis permutasset. Nec enim fas esse hominibus pocula Deo consecrata propriis usibus applicare. Itaque nisi tam iusta causa aut divini numinis reverentia a petendis poculis dimoveatur, retento Sylvano, aurum se pro pateris praebiturum. Hominem enim, qui nihil deliquerit, minime se dediturum esse. Haec erat igitur horum virorum legationis causa, qui barbarum sequebantur, ut responsum ferrent, et dimitterentur. Cum vero nobis eadem via sundem esset, qua Attilas

incedebat, parumper morati, dum praecederet, non multo post secuti, cum reliqua multitudine, traiectis quibusdam amnibus, ad quendam magnum vicum pervenimus. Hic erant Attilae aedes, quae reliquis omnibus ubicumque locorum praestantiores esse ferebantur. Erant hae ex lignis et tabulis eximie politis exstructae et ambitu ligneo circumdatae, non ad mumimentum, sed ad ornatum comparato. Proxima regiae erat Onegesii domus, et ipsa quoque ambitu ligneo constans, non tamen aeque, ac Attilae, turribus insignis. Haud longo intervallo a circuitu domus distabat balneum, quod Onegesius, qui secundum Attilam plurimum apud Scythas opibus valebat, lapidibus ex Paeonia advectis aedificaverat. Nec enim apud eos, qui in ea parte Scythae habitant, ullus est aut lapis, aut arbos, sed materia aliunde advecta utuntur. Huius autem balnei architectus, e Sirmio captivus abductus, mercedem operis sui libertatem se consecuturum sperans, falsus sua spe, cum nihil minus cogitaret, in longe duriorem apud Scythas incidit servitutem. Balneatorem enim eum Onegesius instituit, ut sibi totique suae familiae, cum lavarentur, operas praestaret. In hunc vicum adventanti Attilae puellae obviam prodierunt, quae per series incedebant, sub linteis tenuibus et candidis, quam maxime in longitudinem extensis, ita ut sub unoquoque linteo, manibus mulierum ab utraque parte in altum sublato, septem puellae aut etiam plures progredientes, (erant autem multi huiusmodi mulierum sub illis linteis ordines,) Scythica carmina canerent. Iam proxime Onegesii domum accesserat, (per ipsam enim via ducebat ad regiam,) cum foras prosiliret Onegesii uxor, magna ancillarum comitata

multitudine, quae opsonia et vinum ferebant, qui maximus est apud Scythas honos. Haec Attilam salutavit rogavitque, ut ex cibis desumeret, quos cum summa testificatione suae erga illum voluntatis attulerat. Itaque uxori hominis sibi necessarii gratificaturus, comedit, equo insidens, barbaris, qui in eius comitatu erant, suspensam tabulam (erat autem argentea) attollentibus. Deinde degustato calice, qui illi fuerat oblatus, in regiam se recepit. Erat autem illa reliquis conspectior et in altiori loco sita. Nos vero in aedibus Onegesii (sic ille praeceperat; redierat enim cum Attilae filio;) remansimus. Illic coenam sumpsimus, excipiente nos eius uxore comitata illustrioribus, qui eum genere contingebant. Illi enim animum nobiscum convivio exhilarare per otium minime licuit; quia quae gesserat in negotio, ad quod missus fuerat, et adversum, qui filio Attilae contigerat, casum (dextram enim delapsus fregerat) renuntiaturus, tum primum a reditu in Attilae conspectum venerat. Post coenam, aedibus Onegesii relictis, propius Attilae aedes tentoria posuimus, ut Maximinus, quem Attilam convenire, et cum his, qui ei a consiliis erant, colloquia facere oportebat, minime longo ab Attila distaret intervallo. Illic igitur, quo primum devertimus, noctem transegimus. Luce orta misit me Maximinus ad Onegesium, ut illi tum quae ipse dabat, tum ab Imperatore missa munera traderem et ut ipse cognosceret, an illi secum et quo tempore colloquium inire luberet. Perrexi igitur ad Onegesium cum famulis, qui dona portabant: quum ianuae clausae essent, exspectavi, donec aperirentur, et aliquis exiret, qui eum mei adventus certiorem faceret.

Itaque tempus mihi terenti et circa murorum

ambitum domus Onegesii ambulanti, progressus nescio quis, quem barbarum ex Scythico vestitu esse rebar, Graeca voce me salutavit dicens "χαιρε." Mirari ego, qui fieret, ut Graece loqueretur vir Scytha: etenim ex variis gentibus commixti, barbaricam linguam colunt, sive Hunnorum, sive Gothorum, aut etiam Romanam, hi scilicet, quibus cum Romanis frequentius est commercium. Neque quisquam eorum facile loquitur Graece, nisi si qui sint captivi e Thracia aut Illyrico maritimo. Sed illi ab obvio quoque dignosci possunt et a vestibus laceris et capitis squalore, tanquam qui in miseram inciderint fortunam. Hic vero opulenti Scythae speciem prae se ferebat: erat enim bene et eleganter vestitus, capite in rotundum raso. Hunc resalutans interrogavi, quis esset, et unde in terram barbaram veniens, vitae Scythicae institutum sequi delegisset. Ille quam ob causam hoc ex ipso quaererem, rogavit "Mihi vero, inquam, haec a te ut sciscitarer, causa fuit, quod Graece locutus es." Tum ridens ait, se Graecum esse genere, ad mercaturam faciendam Viminacium, Mysorum ad Istrum urbem, accessisse, in ea domicilium longo tempore habuisse, uxorem quoque divitem duxisse; parta illic felicitate capta urbe exutum fuisse, et propterea quod dives erat, se suaque omnia in praedae divisione Onegesio cessisse. Etenim esse apud eos in more positum, ut praecipui ab Attila Scythiae principes captivos ditiores sibi seponant, quoniam plurimum auctoritate valent. Postea ubi adversus Romanos et Acatzirorum gentem fortissime dimicasset, libertatem se ex more Scytharum, omnibus, quae bello acquisierat, barbaro domino traditis, recuperasse. Uxorem quoque barbaram duxisse, et ex ea liberos

sustulisse, et Onegesii mensae participem, hoc vitae genus longe potius priore ducere. "Qui enim apud Scythas degunt, inquit, tolerato bellorum labore, sine ulla sollicitudine vitam peragunt. Tum unusquisque bonis, quae sibi fortuna indulsit, fruitur, neque quisquam illi ulla in re molestus est. Qui vero sub Romanis aetatem agunt, facile in bello pereunt. Hos enim in aliis sui conservandi spem collocare necesse est, quandoquidem per tyrannos minime licet arma, quibus unusquisque se tueatur, gestare. Atque adeo his, quibus id iure licet, valde est perniciosa ducum ignavia, qui bellum minime gnaviter gerunt. At in pace longe acerbiora sunt, quae accidunt, quam calamitates, quae ex bello proveniunt et propter duram exactionem tributorum, et propter improborum vexationes, quum leges non in omnes valeant. Si quis dives aut potens eas sit transgressus, ille quidem iniquitatis suae poenas non luet: sin aliquis inops, qui negotia gerere nesciat, hunc poena a legibus statuta manet. Nisi forte eum priusquam sententia feratur, longo in litibus continuato tempore, multis praeterea exhaustis opibus, vita defecerit. At mercede et pretio, quod legum et iuris est obtinere, omnium iniquissimum est. Nec enim iniuria affecto quisquam fori iudicialis potestatem faciet, priusquam pecuniam iudicis et eius ministrorum commodo cessuram deponat." Haec atque huiusmodi multa cum in medium proferret, ego precatus, ut quod sentirem, patienter et benigne audiret, respondi, reipublicae Romanae auctores, sapientes et optimos viros, ne quidquam temere ageretur, alios legum custodes fecisse, aliis armorum curam commisisse, ut, ad nullam aliam rem intenti, quam ut se ad pugnam praepararent, militaria opera

exercerent, et propulsata per assiduam belli meditationem omni formidine, consueta militiae exercitatione, animis firmati, in aciem descenderent. " Alios, inquam, qui agris colendis et culturae terrae operam darent, annona militari ab his exacta, eos alere voluerunt, quo pro sua salute dimicarent. Constituerunt quoque, qui iniuria affectis prospicerent, et iura eorum, qui propter naturae infirmitatem sibi ipsi consulere non valerent, tuerentur, quique iure dicendo, quae leges iuberent, servarent. Neque vero sua providentia destitutos reliquerunt eos, qui iudicibus adsunt, sed horum esse partes prospicere, qua ratione ius assequatur, qui sententia iudicum obtinuit, et iniurius iudicatus, id solum, quod iudicii calculus fert, et nihil praeterea, facere cogatur. Si enim non essent huic rei praepositi, aut victore insolentius insurgente, aut eo, qui adversam sententiam reportavit, in preversa mente perstante, ex una lite alterius litis nasceretur exordium. Est autem his constitutum argentum ab illis, qui litibus certant, ut militibus ab agricolis. Quid enim aequius, quam eum, qui opituletur et auxilium ferat, alere et officium mutuo officio rependere ? quemadmodum equiti emolumento est equi, pastori boum et venatori canum cura, et reliquorum animantium, quae homines custodiae et utilitatis causa alunt. Cum enim sumptus in litem factos qui causa cadunt solvant, damnum nulli alii rei, quam suae iniquitati, imputent oportet. Quod ad longum tempus attinet, quod in litibus consumitur, si quando id evenit, id iuris providentius dicendi gratia fit, ne iudices properantes ab accurata iudicandi ratione aberrent. Sic enim iudicant melius esse, tardius finem litibus imponere, quam festinantes

non solum iniquum ius in hominem statuere, verum etiam in deum, iustitiae inventorem, peccare. Leges autem in omnes positae sunt, ut illis etiam ipse Imperator pareat. Neque, id quod tua accusatione continetur, potentiores si tenuioribus vim inferant, id illis est impune, nisi quis forte latens poenam effugerit; quod non solum divitibus, sed etiam inopibus plerumque usu venit: nam hi quoque, si argumenta deficiunt, peccatorum poenas non solvunt. Quod non solum apud Romanos, sed etiam ubique gentium accidit. Gratiam vero plurimam ipsum pro recepta libertate fortunae debere, neque eam domino acceptam referre. Cum enim eum in bellum eduxerit, potuisse ab hostibus propter rei militaris imperitiam occidi, aut si fugisset, ab eo, in cuius dominio erat, puniri. Longe autem Romani benignius servis consuluerunt. Patrum enim, aut praeceptorum affectum erga eos exhibent, et ut a malis abstineant, curant, et eorum, quae honesta ducunt, participes efficiunt. Denique corrigunt eos in his, quae delinquunt, sicut et suos liberos. Nec enim servos morte officere, sicut apud Scythas, fas est. Libertatis vero adipiscendae plures sunt modi. Non enim solum qui vita fruuntur, sed etiam qui e vivis excedunt, libertatem tribuere possunt, quum de bonis suis, ut cuique placeat, statuere liceat, et quodcunque quis moriens de rebus domesticis iusserit, lex sit." Tum ille plorans inquit, leges apud Romanos bonas et rem publicam praeclare constitutam esse, sed magistratus, qui non aeque ac prisci probi et prudentes sunt, eam labefactant et pervertunt.

Haec inter nos disserentibus aliquis ex domesticis Onegesii septorum domus fores aperuit. Ego statim accurrere et quaerere; quas res ageret Onegesius;

me enim habere a Maximino, qui legatus a Romanis venisset, quod illi dicerem. Ille vero Onegesium mihi sui facturum copiam respondit, si paullum opperirer ; exiturum enim esse. Nec multo temporis spatio interiecto, ut ipsum exeuntem vidi, progressus dixi : " Te Romanorum legatus salutat, et dona tibi ab ipso una cum auro ab Imperatore misso adfero." Et quum maxime ille eum convenire cuperet, ubi et quando vellet colloqui, quaesivi. Ille suos, qui aderant, iussit aurum et munera recipere, et me Maximino renuntiare, se protinus ad eum accedere. Reverti igitur ad Maximinum, et renuntiavi, Onegesium ad eum venturum esse : nec mora, in tentorium nostrum advenit, et Maximinum affatus dixit, se Imperatori et illi pro muneribus gratias agere, et percunctatus est, quandoquidem se arcessisset, quid esset, quod illum vellet : tum Maximinus, instare tempus, ait, quo posset maiorem gloriam apud homines adipisci, si ad Imperatorem accedens, quae sunt inter Romanos et Hunnos controversa, sua prudentia componeret, et inter utramque gentem concordiam stabiliret : quae res non solum utilitati utriusque gentis esset cessura, sed etiam eius domui tanta bona praebitura, ut ipse una cum suis liberis in posterum Imperatori totique imperatorio generi in perpetuum devinctus foret. Tum Onegesius dixit, qua in re gratificaretur Imperatori, et per se contentiones dirimeret. Maximinus respondit, si in rem praesentem descendens, Imperatori gratiam referret, et dissidiorum causas sedulo perscrutans, de rebus controversis secundum conditiones foederibus adscriptas iudicium suum interponeret. Tum Onegesius dixit, se Imperatori et iis, qui ei a consiliis

essent, ea dicturum esse, quae Attilas sibi praeciperet. "An Romani existimant, inquit, se ullis precibus exorari posse, ut prodat dominum suum, et nihili faciat educationem apud Scythas, uxores et liberos suos, neque potiorem ducat apud Attilam servitutem, quam apud Romanos ingentes opes?" Ceterum se domi remanentem maiori eorum rebus adiumento futurum, quippe qui domini iram placaret, si quibus in rebus irasceretur, quam si ad eos accedens criminationi se obiiceret, si forte quid contra quam Attilae rationibus commodum videretur faceret. Quae cum dixisset et mihi veniam dedisset eum de his, quae ex ipso intelligere cuperemus, adeundi, (Maximino enim in dignitate constituto parum decorus erat continuus congressus,) abiit. Postridie ad domus Attilae interiora septa me contuli dona ferens eius uxori, quae Cerca vocabatur. Ex ea tres illi liberi, quorum maximus natu iam tum Acatzirorum et reliquarum gentium, qua Scythia ad Pontum patet, regnum tenebat. Intra illa septa erant multa aedificia, partim ex tabulis sculptis et eleganter compactis, partim ex trabibus opere puro et in rectitudinem affabre dolatis, in quibus ligna in circulos curvata imposita erant. Circuli autem a solo incipientes paullatim in altum assurgebant. Hic habitabat Attilae uxor, ad quam a barbaris, qui circa ianuas erant, nactus aditum, ipsam deprehendi in molli stragula iacentem. Erat autem pavimentum laneis tapetibus stratum, in quibus constitimus. Eam famulorum multitudo in orbem circumstabat, et ancillae ex adverso humi sedentes telas coloribus variegabant, quae vestibus barbarorum ad ornatum superiniiciuntur. Cerca salutata, et muneribus

traditis, egressus, exspectans dum Onegesius regia exiret, (iam enim e domo sua illuc venerat,) ad reliqua aedificia, ubi Attilas commorabatur, processi. Hic dum ego starem cum reliqua multitudine, (nec enim accessu ullius loci prohibebar, quippe qui Attilae custodibus et barbaris, qui eum assectabantur, eram notus,) vidi magnam turbam, qua prodibat, currentem, tumultum et strepitum excitantem. Attilas domo egressus, gravi vultu, omnium oculis quaqua versus in eum conversis, incedens cum Onegesio, pro aedibus substitit. Hic eum multi, quibus erant lites, adierunt, et eius iudicium exceperunt. Deinde domum repetiit, et barbararum gentium legatos, qui ad se venerant, admisit.

Me vero, dum Onegesium exspectabam, Romulus, Promutus et Romanus, legati de vasis aureis ex Italia ad Attilam missi, una cum Rusticio, qui in comitatu Constantii erat, et Constantiolo ex Paeonum regione, quae Attilae parebat, me sunt sermone adorti, et interrogaverunt, utrum dimissi, an manere coacti essemus. "Id ipsum, inquam, ut sciam ex Onegesio, intra ista septa opperior." Tum ego illos vicissim percunctari, an aliquod mite responsum ad ea, de quibus legati venerant, ab Attila tulissent. Nequaquam aiunt illum deduci a sententia, sed bellum minari et denuntiare, ni Sylvanus aut pocula dedantur. Nos vero cum barbari miraremur animi impotentiam, Romulus, vir multis honorificentissimis legationibus functus et multo rerum usu praeditus, ait, secunda fortuna et potentia inde collecta adeo illum efferri, ut iustis sermonibus nullum apud si locum relinqueret, nisi eos ex re sua esse censeret. Nemo unquam eorum, qui in Scythia, vel alibi

regnarunt, tantas res tam brevi tempore gessit. Totius Scythiae dominatum sibi comparavit, et ad Oceani insulas usque imperium suum extendit, ut etiam a Romanis tributa exigat. Nec his contentus, ad longe maiora animum adiecit, et latius imperii sui fines protendere et Persas bello aggredi cogitat. Uno ex nobis quaerente, qua via e Scythia in Persas tendere posset, Romulus dixit, non longo locorum intervallo Medos dissitos esse a Scythis, neque Hunnos hanc viam nescire, sed olim, fame per eorum regionem grassante, cum Romani propter bellum, quod tunc temporis gerebant, minime cum illis proelio decertarent, hac irrupisse, et ad Medos usque Bazicum et Cursicum, duces ipsorum, e regiis Scythis oriundos, penetrasse, qui postea cum magna hominum multitudine Romam ad contrahendam armorum societatem venissent. Hos narrasse, per quandam desertam regionem illis iter fuisse, et paludem trajecisse, quam Romulus existimabat esse Maeotidem: deinde, quindecim diebus elapsis, per montes quosdam, quos superassent, in Mediam descendisse. Ibi praedas agentibus et excursionibus agros vastantibus Persicum agmen superveniens telis aëra replevisse. Itaque imminentis periculi metu retro abscessisse, et per montes regressos, pauxillum praedae abegisse. Magnam enim partem Medos extorsisse: ipsos autem, ut persequentium hostium impetum evitarent, ad aliam viam deflexisse. Et per loca, ubi ex petra maritima flamma ardet, illinc profectos, . . . dierum itinere in sedes suas revertisse. Atque ex eo satis vidisse, non magno intervallo Scythiam a Medis distare. Quamobrem si Attilam cupido ceperit Medos invadendi, non multum operae et laboris in eam

invasionem consumpturum, neque magnis itineribus defatigatum iri, ut Medos, Parthos et Persas adoriatur, et cogat tributi illationi se submittere. Adesse enim illi magnas copias, quas nulla gens sustinere possit. Nobis vero optantibus, ut Persis arma inferret, et a nobis in illos belli molem averteret: "Verendum est inquit Constantiolus, ne, Persis facile devictis, non iam amplius amicus, sed dominus in nos revertatur." Nunc enim auro accepto pro dignitate eum contentum esse. Quodsi Medos, Parthos et Persas domuerit, minime eum Romanorum a suo seiunctum regnum sed eos manifesto servos suos reputantem, gravia illis et intolerabilia imperaturum esse. Dignitas autem, cuius mentionem Constantiolus fecit, erat Romanorum exercituum ducis, quam Attilas ab Imperatore acceperat, et stipendia eius, qui exercitus regebat, missa sibi non recusabat. Innuebat igitur, Attilam, Medis, Parthis et Persis subactis, hoc nomen, quo Romanis illum vocare lubet, et dignitatem, quam illi ornamenti loco esse existimant, repudiaturum, et pro duce coacturum eos se regem appellare. Iam tum enim indignatus dicebat, illi servos esse exercituum duces, sibi vero viros Imperatoribus Romanis dignitate pares. Et brevi quidem sibi potentiae accessionem fore, quod et deus, Martis ense in lucem protracto, portenderit. Hic tanquam sacer et deo bellorum praesidi dedicatus, a Scytharum regibus olim colebatur, et mulsit saeculis non visus, bovis ministerio fuerat tunc temporis erutus.

Dum ita de praesenti rerum statu confabulamur, Onegesius foras prodiit, ad quem, ut ex eo disceremus, quae nostrae curae commissa fuerant, accessimus. Ille vero prius cum nescio quibus barbaris collucutus, quarere me ex Maximino iussit, quem Romani ex

consularibus legatum ad Attilam essent missuri. Ut in tentorium veni, et Maximino, quae mihi Onegesius dixerat, retuli, habita de eo, quod barbaris respondendum esset, deliberatione, redii, dixique Onegesio, Romanos magnopere desiderare, illum suarum cum Attila controversiarum disceptatorem ad se accedere. Qua spe si exciderint, Imperatorem, quem sibi libuerit, legatum missurum. Extemplo me Maximinum arcessere iussit, quem, ut venit, ad Attilam deduxit. Unde non multo post Maxmiminus reversus, narravit, barbarum velle, Imperatorem ad se mittere legatos aut Nomum, aut Anatolium, aut Senatorem, neque ullos alios praeter hos admissurum. Et cum Maximinus obiiceret, minime convenire, legatos, qui ad se mittantur, designando, suspectos Imperatori reddere, Attilam respondisse, si haec abnuerint, armis se controversias disceptaturum. Reversis nobis in tentorium, ecce ad nos Orestis pater, "Vos ambos, inquit, ad convivium invitat Attilas, fiet vero illud ad nonam diei horam." Tempore condicto observato, ut venimus, et una quoque Romanorum Occidentalium legati, stetimus in limine coenaculi coram Attila. Hic pincernae, ut mos est in illis regionibus, calicem tradiderunt, ut ante accubitum vota faceremus. Quo facto, et calice degustato, ipsa solia, in quibus nos sedentes coenare oportebat, ascendimus. Omnia sedilia circa parietes cubiculi ab utraque parte disposita erant: medius in lecto sedebat Attilas, altero lecto a tergo strato, pone quem erant quidam gradus, qui ad eius cubile ferebant, linteis candidis et variis tapetibus ornatus gratia contectum, simile cubilibus, quae Romani et Graeci nubentibus adornare pro more habent. Et primum quidem convivarum locum eius habebant, qui ad

Attilae dextram sedebat, secundum eius, qui ad laevam: in quo nos et Berichus, vir apud Scythas nobilis, sed Berichus superiore loco. Nam Onegesius in sella ad dextram regii thori, et e regione Onegesii duo ex Attilae filiis sedebant. Senior enim in eodem, quo pater, throno, non prope, sed multum infra accumbebat, oculis prae pudore propter patris praesentiam semper in terram coniectis. Omnibus ordine sedentibus, qui Attilae erat a poculis ingrediens pateram vini tradit. Hanc ubi suscepit, proximum ordine salutavit, qui salutatione honoratus surrexit, neque prius eum sedere fas erat, quam merum degustans, aut etiam ebibens, poculum pocillatori redderet. Sedenti autem Attilae eodem modo, qui convivio intererant, pocula suscipientes et post salutationem degustantes, honorem exhibebant. Unicuique vero unus pocillator aderat, quem, quum pincerna Attilae exiret, introire suo ordine oportuit. Secundo et reliquis deinceps ad hunc modum honore affectis, Attilas nos quoque eodem modo salutavit secundum ordinem sellarum. Tum omnibus salutationis honore delato, pincernae recesserunt. Mensae vero iuxta Attilae mensam erant erectae, excipiendis tribus et quatuor, aut etiam pluribus convivis idoneae, quorum unusquisque poterat minime transgressus sedium ordines ex ferculis, quod sibi libitum erat, desumere. Deinde primus in medium accessit Attilae minister, patinam carnibus plenam ferens. Post ipsum qui panem ministrabant et opsonia mensis apposuerunt. Sed ceteris quidem barbaris et nobis lautissima coena praeparata erat et is discis argenteis reposita, Attilae in quadra lignea, et nihil praeter carnes. Moderatum pariter in reliquis omnibus sese praehebat. Convivis aurea et argentea pocula sup-

peditabantur, Attilae poculum erat ligneum. Simplex admodum illius vestis nulla re, nisi munditie, ornata erat. Neque eius ensis, neque calceorum barbarorum ligamina, neque eius equi frena, ut reliquorum Scytharum, auro aut lapidibus aut alia quacunque re pretiosa erant ornata. Ut opsonia primorum ferculorum fuere consumpta, surreximus, neque prius quisquam nostrum ad sedem suam est reversus, quam sibi traditam pateram vini plenam, servato priore ordine, Attilam salvum et incolumem precatus, ebibisset. Eo ad hunc modum honore culto, sedimus.' Tum nova fercula cuique mensae sunt illata, quae alia continebant esculenta, ex quibus ubi omnes, quoad satis esset, comedissent, eodem modo surreximus, et epoto calice rursus consedimus. Advieniete vespere, facibusque accensis, duo Scythae coram Attila prodierunt, et versus a se factos, quibus eius victorias et bellicas virtutes canebant, recitarunt. In quos convivae oculos defixerunt; et alii quidem versibus delectabantur, aliis bellorum recordatio animos excitabat, aliis manabant lacrymae, quorum corpus aetate debilitatum erat, et vigor animi quiescere cogebatur. Post cantus et carmina Scytha nescio quis mente captus absurda et inepta nec sani quicquam habentia effundens risum omnibus commovit. Postremo Zercon Maurusius introivit. Edecon enim illi persuaserat, ut ad Attilam veniret, omnem operam et studium pollicitus, quo uxorem recuperaret. Hanc enim, cum illi Bleda faveret, in barbarorum regione acceperat, eamque in Scythia, ab Attila ad Aetium dono missus, reliquerat. Sed hac spe frustratus est, quia Attilas illi succensuit, quod ad sua remigrasset. Itaque tunc arrepta festivitatis occasione progressus, et forma et habitu

et pronuntiatione et verbis confuse ab eo prolatis, Romanae Hunnorum et Gothorum linguam intermiscens, omnes laetitia implevit et effecit, ut in vehementem risum prorumperent. Sed Attilas semper eodem vultu, omnis mutationis expers, et immotus permansit, neque quicquam facere, aut dicere, quod iocum, aut hilaritatem prae se ferret, conspectus est: praeter quam quod iuniorem ex filiis introeuntem et adventatem, nomine Irnach, placidis et laetis oculis est intuitus, et eum gena traxit. Ego vero cum admirarer, Attilam reliquos suos liberos parvi facere, ad hunc solum animum adiicere, unus ex barbaris, qui prope me sedebat et Latinae linguae usum habebat fide prius accepta, me nihil eorum, quae dicerentur, evulgaturum, dixit, vates Attilae vaticinatos esse, eius genus, quod alioquin interiturum erat, ab hoc puero restauratum iri. Ut vero convivium ad multam noctem protraxerunt, non diutius nobis compotationi indulgendum esse rati exivimus.

Die exorto, Onegesium adivimus dicentes, nos dimitti oportere, neque nobis diutius tempus terendum esse. Ille, Attilam quoque in ea esse voluntate, et nos dimittere constituisse, respondit. Itaque non multo post consilium procerum de his, quae Attilas statuerat, habuit, et litteras, quae Imperatori redderentur, digessit. Aderant quoque, quorum curae epistolas scribere incumbebat, inter quos erat Rusticius, vir e superiore Mysia ortus, qui ab hostibus captus, cum dicendi facultate valeret, barbaro operam in conscribendis epistolis navabat. Dimisso consilio, ab Onegesio precibus contendimus, ut Syllae uxori et eius liberis, qui in expugatione urbis Ratiariae una cum matre in servitutem redacti

erant, libertatem restitueret. Et vero ab his liberandis minime abhorrebat, sed eorum libertatem magna pecuniae summa a nobis emptam volebat. Itaque nos eum supplices orare et obtestari, ut, habita eorum pristinae fortunae ratione, praesentis calamitatis commiseratione moveretur. Ille, ut Attilam adiit, mulierem pro quingentis aureis liberam dimisit et eius filios dono ad Imperatorem misit. Interea Recan, Attilae uxor, in aedes Adamis, qui eius res domesticas curabat, nos ad coenam invitavit. Ab eo una cum pluribus Scythiae principibus comiter excepti sumus et iucundis sermonibus et magnifico epularum apparatu. Tum unusquisque eorum, qui aderant, surgens, Scythica comitate poculum plenum nobis porrexit, et eum, qui ante se biberat, amplexus et exosculatus, illud excepit. A coena nos in tentorium nostrum recipientes, somnum cepimus. Postridie iterum nos Attilas ad coenam invitavit, et eodem, quo prius, ritu ad eum accessimus et ad hilaritatem nos convertimus. Tum autem non senior ex filiis Attilae in eius thoro una cum ipso accumbebat, sed Oebarsius, eius patruus. Per totum convivii tempus nos blandis sermonibus appellans Imperatori dicere iussit, ut Constantio, quem ad eum Aetius, ut ab epistolis esset, miserat, uxorem daret eam, quam illi promisisset. Etenim Constantius una cum Attilae legatis ad Theodosium venerat, et se operam daturum, ut pax longo tempore inter Romanos et Hunnos servaretur, dixerat, modo sibi uxorem locupletem matrimonio copularet. Huic petitioni Imperator annuerat, et Saturnini filiam, viri et opibus, et genere clari et ornati, se illi nuptui daturum promiserat. Saturninum autem interemerat Athenais seu Eudocia,

(utroque enim nomine vocabatur,) neque Imperatori ad exitum perducere, quod promiserat, per Zenonem, virum consularem, licuit. Is enim olim magna Isaurorum multitudine stipatus, urbi Constantinopoli, quae bello premebatur, praesidio fuerat. Qui quum orientalium exercituum dux esset, puellam custodia eduxit, et Rufo cuidam, uni ex suis necessariis, despondit. Hac puella sibi subtracta, Constantius barbarum orabat, ne sibi factam contumeliam negligeret, sed perficeret, ut sibi uxor daretur aut sa, quae erepta fuerat, aut etiam alia, quae dotem adferret. Quamobrem per coenae tempus barbarus Maximinum Imperatori dicere iussit, non oportere Constantium spe ab ipso excitata falli, et ab Imperatoris dignitate alienum videri, mendacem esse. Haec Attilas Maximino mandavit, propterea quod Constantius illi ingentem pecuniae summam pollicitus erat, si uxorem e Romanis puellis locupletem duceret. Sub nocte a coena discessimus.

Tribus deinde diebus elapsis, muneribus donati dimissi sumus. Attilas quoque Berichum, virum e Scythiae primoribus, multorum vicorum in Scythia dominum, et qui in convivio superiore loco sederat, nobiscum legatum ad Imperatorem misit. Hunc enim et alias Romani pro legato admiserant. Nobis autem iter conficientibus et in vico quodam commorantibus, captus est vir Scytha, qui a Romanis explorandi gratia in barbaram regionem descenderat, quem crucis supplicio affici Attilas praecepit. Postridie etiam dum per alios vicos progrederemur, duo, qui apud Scythas serviebant, manibus vincti post terga trahebantur, quod his, quos belli casus dominos fecisset, vitam eripuissent. Hos, immissis

inter duo ligna uncis praedita capitibus, in cruce necarunt. Berichus vero, quamdiu Scythiam peragravimus, eadem via nobiscum iverat, et placidus et amicus visus erat. Ut Istrum traiecimus, propter quasdam vanas causas, a servis ortas, nos inimicorum loco habuit. Et primum quidem equum, quem Maximino dono dederat, ad se revocavit. Etenim Attilas omnes Scythiae principes, qui in ipsius comitatu erant, donis Maximinum ornare iusserat, et unusquisque certatim illi equum miserat, inter quos et Berichus. At ille cum moderationis gloriam sibi comparare studeret, ex equis oblatis paucos acceperat, reliquos reiecerat. Berichus igitur equum, quem Maximino dederat, ademit, neque deinceps eadem via ire aut coenari nobiscum voluit. Itaque hospitalitatis tessera, in barbara regione contracta, eo usque progressa est. Hinc per Philippopolim ad Adrianopolim nobis iter fuit. In hac civitate quiescentes, Berichum rursus allocuti cum eo, quod tamdiu erga nos silentium tenuisset, expostulavimus. Nec enim ullam fuisse causam cur nobis irasceretur, quandoquidem in nulla re cum offenderamus. Itaque eo placato et ad coenam invitato, ab Adrianopoli movimus. In itinere Bigilam, qui in Scythiam revertebatur, obvium habuimus: quo edocto, quae Attilas ad legationem nostram responderat, coeptum iter continuavimus. Ut Constantinopolim venimus, Berichum existimabamus iram abiecisse, sed agrestis et ferae suae naturae minime est oblitus. Nam Maximinum insimulavit dixisse, quum in Scythiam transiisset, Areobindi et Asparis, exercituum docum, auctoritatem apud Imperatorem nullius esse ponderis, et cum barbarorum levitatem

et inconstantiam notasset, eorum gesta in nullo pretio habuisse.

Reversum Bigilam, quum in iis locis advenisset, ubi tum Attilas commorabatur, circumstantes barbari ad id praeparati comprehenderunt, et manus in pecunias, quas Edeconi adferebat, iniecerunt. Quam ipsum ad Attilam adduxissent, is ex eo quaesivit, cuius rei gratia tantum auri asportasset. Illi respondit, ut suis et comitum suorum necessitatibus provideret, ne rerum necessariarum inopia, aut equorum, aut aliorum animalium vecturae aptorum penuria, quae per longa itinera deperierant, a studio obeundarum legationum avocaretur. Praeterea ad redemptionem captivorum pecuniam paratam esse. Multos enim ex Romanis a se magnopere petiisse, ut propinquos suos redimeret. Cui Attilas: "Sed neque iam, o turpis bestia, Bigilam appellans, ullum tibi tuis cavillationibus iudicii subeundi patebit effugium: neque ulla satis idonea causa erit, qua meritum supplicium evitare possis. Longe enim maior summa est, quam qua tibi sit opus ad sustentandam familiam, vel etiam quam impendas in emptionem equorum, vel iumentorum, vel liberationem captivorum, quam iamdudum Maximino, quum huc veniebat, interdixi." Haec dicens, filium Bigilae (is tum primum patrem secutus in barbaram regionem venerat) ense occidi iubet, nisi pater, quem in usum et quam ob causam tantum auri advexisset, aperiret. Ille ut vidit filium morti addictum, ad lacrymas conversus, ius implorare, et ensem in se mitti debere, non in filium, qui nihil commeruisset. Nec cunctatus omnia clandestina consilia, quae a se, ab Edecone, ab eunucho et Imperatore in Attilam composita fuerant,

aperuit, et ad preces prolapsus, orare et obtestari, ut se occideret, et filium nihil promeritum liberaret. Cum autem Attilas ex his, quae Edecon sibi detexerat, Bigilam nihil mentitum perspiceret, in vincula duci praecepit, e quibus non prius eum exsoluturum minatus est, quam eius filius in eam dimissus alias quinquaginta auri libras pro utriusque liberatione exsolvisset, et Bigilas quidem in vincula est conieçtus, filius autem ad Romanos rediit. Misit etiam Attilas Orestem et Eslam Constantinopolim.

4. Hinc Attilas, illinc Zeno Chrysaphium ad poenam de poscebant. Omnium autem in eum animis et studiis inclinatis, visum est ad Attilam legatos, mittere Anatolium et Nomum: Anatolium quidem magistrum militum praesentalem, et qui pacis cum barbaro initae conditiones proposuerat: Nomum veri magistri dignitatem gerentem, et in numerum patriciorum una cum Anatolio allectum, quae dignitas ceteris omnibus antecellit. Missus vero est cum Anatolio Nomus nom solum propter dignitatis amplitudinem, sed etiam quia erat benevolo in Chrysaphium animo, et apud barbarum gratia et auctoritate plurimum valebat. Nam si quid perficiendum sibi proposuerat, minime pecuniis parcendum esse censebat. Et illi quidem mittebantur, quo Attilam ira dimoverent et pacis conditiones observare persuaderent, illud quoque dicturi, Constantio nuptum datum iri puellam minime Saturnini filiae genere et opibus inferiorem. Illam enim minime gratum huiusmodi matrimonium habuisse: itaque secundum legem alteri nupsisse. Nec enim apud Romanos fas esse, mulierem invitam viro collocare. Misit et eunuchus aurum ad barbarum, quo mollitus ab ira deduceretur.

5. Anatolius et Nomus, Istro transmisso, ad Drenconem fluvium usque (sic enim appellant) in Scythiam penetrarunt. Illic Attilas reverentia tantorum virorum motus, ne longioribus itineribus defatigarentur, cum illis convenit. Initio quidem multa superbe et insolenter disserens, tandem magnitudine munerum aequior factus est et blanda legatorum oratione delinitus, se pacem servaturum secundum conventiones, iuravit; se quoque omni regione trans Istrum, tanquam Romanorum iuris ditionisque cedere, neque porro Imperatori de profugis reddendis molestum futurum, modo Romani in posterum a transfugis admittendis temperarent. Liberavit et Bigilam, numeratis quinquaginta auri libris, quas Bigilae filius cum legatis in Scythiam veniens attulerat. Tum et Anatolio et Nomo gratificans, quam plurimos captivos illis sine ullo pretio concessit. Postremo donatos equis et ferarum pellibus, quibus Scythae regii ad ornatum utuntur, dimisit. Comitem illis addidit Constantium, ut Imperator ipse re confirmaret, quae verbis promiserat. Ut legati redierunt, et cum Attila ultro citroque acta retulerunt, Constantio nuptui datur quondam uxor Armatii, filii Plinthae, qui apud Romanos exercituum dux fuerat et consulatum inierat. Ille in Lybiam profectus acie cum Ausorianis decertaverat et prospere pugnarat: mox morbo correptus vitam finierat. Eius uxori, genere et divitiis conspicuae, post mariti obitum Imperator nubere Constantio persuaserat. Sed sopitis omnibus ad hunc modum cum Attila controversiis, Theodosium novus timor occupavit, ne Zeno tyrannidem invaderet.

III

JORNANDES: DE REBUS GETICIS

Muratori: Rerum Italicarum Scriptores (1723) *Vol. I.*

Caput XXXIV

Theodericus V. Vesegotharum Rex, In hunc Romani cum Auxiliaribus Hunnis rupta pace exercitum ducunt. Foedera firmantur. Attila pacatur. Item de Attila aula.

Defuncto Valia, ut superiùs quod diximus repetamus, qui parum fuerant felix Gallis,[1] prosperrimus, feliciorque Thodoricus successit in regno: homo summa moderatione, compositus animi, corporisque virilitate[2] abundans. Contra quem Theodosio. et Festo Consulibus, pace rupta Romani Hunnis auxiliaribus secum junctis, in Gallias arma moverunt. Turbaverat namque eos Gothorum foederatorum manus, quae cum Caina Comite Constantinopolim se foederasset.[3] Aetius ergo Patricius tunc praeerat militibus, fortissimorum Moesiorum stirpe progenitus, in Dorastena[4] civitate, à patre Gaudentio, labores bellicos tolerans, Reipub. Romanae singulariter natus, qui superbiam Suevorum, Francorumque barbariem immensis caedibus servire Romano

[1] A. Gallus.
[2] Garetius al. utilitate, ita in Ambros.
[3] Garetius al. efferasset, ita in Ambros.
[4] A. Dorestana.

Imperio coegisset.[1] Hunnis quoque auxiliariis, Litorio ductante, contra Gothos Romanus exercitus movit procinctum, diuque ex utraque parte acie ordinata, quum utrique fortes, & neuter firmior esset,[2] datis dextris in pristinam concordiam redierunt, foedereque firmato, ab alterutro fida pace peracta, recessit uterque.[3] Qua pacatur Attila Hunnorum omnium dominus, & penè totius Scythiae gentium solus in mundo regnator, qui erat famosâ inter omnes gentes claritate mirabilis. Ad quem in legationem remissus[4] à Theodosio juniore Priscus tali voce inter alia refert. Ingenita siquidem flumina, idest Tysiam, Tibisiamque, & Driccam transeuntes, venimus in locum illum, ubi dudum Vidicula[5] Gothorum fortissimus Sarmatum dolo occubuit. Indeque non longè ad vicum, in quo Rex Attila morabatur, accessimus: vicum inquam ad instar civitatis amplissimae, in quo lignea moenia ex tabulis nitentibus fabricata reperimus, quarum compago ita solidum mentiebatur, ut vix ab intento posset junctura tabularum comprehendit. Videres triclinia ambitu prolixiore distenta, porticusque in omni decore dispositas. Area verò curtis[6] ingenti ambitu cingebatur, ut amplitudo ipsa regiam aulam ostenderet. Hae sedes erant Attilae Regis barbariam totam tenentis,[7] haec captis civitatibus habitacula praeponebat.

[1] A. coegit.
[2] A. infirmior esset.
[3] A. secessit uterque. Qua pace Attila.
[4] A. se missum.
[5] A. & Garetius Vidigoja.
[6] A. Cortis.
[7] A. Hae sedes erant Attilae Regi barbariem totam tenenti.

CAPUT XXXV

De Attilae Regis Hunnorum Patre, Fratribus, deque ipsius statura, forma, & moribus. Item de gladio Martis, quem ipse usurpavit. Locus insignis è Prisco historico.

Is namque Attila patre genitus Mundzucco, cujus fuere germani, Octar. and Roas, qui ante Attilam regnum Hunnorum tenuisse narrantur, quamvis non omnino cunctorum. Eorum ipse post obitum cum Bleta[1] germano Hunnorum successit in regnum, and ut antè expeditioni, quam parabat, par foret, augmentum virium parricidio quaerit, tendens ad discrimen omnium nece suorum. Sed librante justitia detestabili[2] remedio crescens, deformes exitus suae crudelitatis invênit. Bletae[3] enim fratre staudibus perempto, qui magnae parti regnabat Hunnorum, universum sibi populum sudjugavit,[4] aliarumque gentium, quas tunc in ditione tenebat, numerositate collectas primas mundi gentes, Romanos, Vesegotasque subdere peroptabat. Cujus exercitus quingentorum millium esse numerus ferebatur. Vir in concussionem gentis[5] natus in mundo, terrarum omnium metus, qui nescio qua sorte terrebat cuncta, formidabili de se opinione vulgatâ. Erat namque superbus incessu, huc atque illuc circumferens oculos, ut elati potentia ipso quoque motu corporis appareter. Bellorum quidem amator, sed ipse manu temperans, consilio validissimus, supplicantibus exorabilis, pro-

[1] A. quorum ipse post quorum obitum cum Bleda, &c. Garet. al. legit. Bledam. Prosper Budam.
[2] A. Justitiae remedio.
[3] A. Bleda, Garetius al. Buda.
[4] A. adunavit.
[5] A. gentium.

pitius in fide semel receptis. Formâ brevis, lato pectore, capite grandiori minutis oculis, rarus barbâ, canis aspersus, simo[1] naso, teter colore, originis suae signa restituens. Qui quamvis hujus esset naturae, ut semper magna confideret, addebat ei tamen confidentiam gladius Martis inventus, sacer apud Scytharum reges semper habitus. Quem Priscus historicus tali refert occasione detectum. Cùm pastor, inquiens, quidam gregis unam buculam conspiceret claudicantem; nec causam tanti vulneris inveniret, solicitus vestigia cruoris insequitur, tandemque venit ad gladium, quem depascens herbas bucula incautè calcaverat, effossumque protinus ad Attilam defert. Quo ille munere gratulatus, ut erat magnanimus, arbitratur se totius mundi Principem constitutum, & per Martis gladium potestatem sibi concessam esse bellorum.

Caput XXXVI

Attila, suapte natura ad vastandum orbem paratus, à Gizerico Wandalorum Rege multis muneribus ad id instigatur. Is omni ratione discordiam inter Romanos, & Gothos serere conatur; sed frustra. Epistola Valentiniani Imp. ad Vesegothas, eorumque responsum.

Hujus ergo mentem ad vastationem orbis paratam comperiens Gizericus Rex Wandalorum, quem paulo ante memoravimus, multis muneribus ad Vesegotharum bella praecipitat, metuens ne Theodericus Vesegotharum Rex filiae[2] ulcisceretur injuriam, quae Hunericho Gizerici filio juncta, prius

[1] A. simeo. [2] A. filiae suae.

quidem tanto conjugio laetaretur; sed postea, ut erat ille & in sua pignora truculentus, ob suspicionem tantummodo veneni ab ea parati, eam naribus abscissis, truncatisque auribus spolians decore naturali, patri suo ad Gallias remiserat, ut turpe[1] funus miseranda semper offerret, & crudelitas, qua etiam moverentur externi, vindictam patris efficaciùs impetraret. Attila igitur dudum bella concepta Gizerici redemptione parturiens, legatos in Italiam ad Valentinianum Principem misit serens Gothorum Romanorumque discordiam: ut quos praelio non poterat concutere, odiis internis elideret, adserens se Reipub. ejus amicitias in nullo violare, sed contra Theodericum Vesegotharum Regem sibi esse certamen, unde eum excipi libenter optaret. Caetera epistolae usitatis salutationum blandimentis oppleverat, studens fidem adhibere mendacio. Pari etiam modo ad Regem Vesegotharum Theodericum dirigit scriptum, hortans ut à Romanorum societate discederet, recoleretque praelia, quae paulò ante contra eum fuerunt concitata sub nimia feritate. Homo subtilis, antequam bella gereret, arte pugnabat. Tunc Valentinianus Imperator ad Vesegothas, eorumque Regem Theodericum in his verbis legationem direxit. Prudentiae vestrae est, fortissime gentium, adversùs urbis[2] conspirare tyrannum, qui optat mundi generale habere servitium, qui causas praelii non requirit, sed quicquid commiserit, hoc putat esse legitimum. Ambitum suum brachio metìtur, superbiam licentia satiat, qui jus fasque contemnens, hostem se exhibet naturae cunctorum. Etenim meretur hic odium, qui

[1] A. scilicet ut turpe.

[2] A, fortissimi gentium adversùs orbis, & ita Garetius.

in commune omnium se approbat inimicum. Recordamini quaeso, quod certè non potest oblivisci. Ab Hunnis casus est fusus, sed quod graviter agit, insidiis agit appetitum. Unde[1] ut de nobis taceamus potestis hanc inulti ferre superbiam? Armorum potentes,[2] favete propriis doloribus, & communes jungite manus. Auxiliamini etiam Reipub. cujus membrum tenetis. Quàm sit autem nobis expetenda, vel amplexanda societas, hostes[3] interrogate consilia. His & similibus legati Valentiniani Regem permovêre Theodericum. Quibus ille respondit: Habetis, inquit Romani, desiderium vestrum: fecistis Attiiam, & nobis hostem Sequimur illum quocunque vocaverit, & quamvis infletur de diversis superbarum gentium victoriis, norunt tamen Gothi confligere cum superbis. Nullum bellum dixerim grave, nisi quod causa debilitat, quando nil triste pavet, cui majestas arriserit. Acclamant responso comites Ducis, laetum sequitur vulgus. Fit omnibus ambitus pugnae, hostes jam Hunni desiderantur. Producitur itaque à Rege Theoderico Vesegotharum innumerabilis[4] multitudo, qui quatuor filiis domi dismissis idest Friderico, & Turico, Rotemero, & Himmerit,[5] secum tantùm Thorismund, & Theodericum majores natu participes laboris assumit. Felix procinctus auxiliantium suave collegium habere, & solatia illorum, quos delectat ipsa etiam simul subire discrimina. A parte verò

[1] A. Ab Hunnis non per bella, ubi communis casus est fusum, sed quod graviter anget insidiis appetitum, ut de nobis, &c.

[2] A. potestates.

[3] A. hos interrogate, &c.

[4] A. innumerabilis exercitus.

[5] A. Teurico, Retemere, & Irinnerit.

Romanorum tanta Patricii Aetii providentia fuit, cui tunc innitebatur Respub. Hesperiae plagae, ut undique bellatoribus congregatis, adversùs ferocem, & infinitam multitudinem non impar occurreret. His enim adfuere auxiliares[1] Franci, Samatae, Armoritiani, Litiani, Burgundiones, Saxones, Riparioli, Ibriones,[2] quondam milites Romani, tunc verò jam in numero auxiliariorum exquisiti, aliaeque nonnullae Celticae, vel Germanicae nationes. Convenitur itaque in campos Catalaunicos, qui & Mauricii nominantur C.[3] leugas,[4] ut Galli vocant, in longum tenentes, & LXX. in latum. Leuga autem Gallica mille & quingentorum passuum quantitate metìtur. Fit ergo area innumerabilium populorum pars illa terrarum. Conseruntur acies utraeque fortissimae, nihil subreptionibus agitur, sed aperto marte certatur. Quae potest digno causa tantorum motibus inveniri? Aut quod odium in se cunctos animavit armari? Probatum est humanum genus Regibus vivere, quando unius mentis insano impetu strages sit facta populorum, & arbitrio superbi Regis momento dejicitur, quod tot saeculis natura progenuit.

[1] A. Hi enim adfuerunt auxiliatores Franci.

[2] A. Liticiani, Burgundiones, Saxones, Riparii, Olibriones.

[3] A. in campis Catalaunicis, qui et Mauriaci vocantur.

[4] Leuga verbum, Gallorum est, & merè Francicum, ut constat ex D. Hieronymò in Joelem, Paulo Diacono lib. 15, & Amm. Marcel. lib. 15, pag. 68 & lib. 16, pag. 91. ex legibus Bajomar, & Rutelio lib. 2. Itiner. ut enim Romani milliaribus, sic Galli leugis mentiri Soliti sunt, Juret.

CAPUT XXXVII

De iis rebus, quae in ipsorum bellorum motibus, priusquam praelium inter Romanos, & Hunnos committeretur, acciderunt.

SED antequam pugnae ipsius ordinem referamus, necessarium videretur edicere quae in ipsis bellorum motibus accidêre, quia sicut famosum praelium, ita multiplex, atque perplexum. Sangibanus namque Rex Alanorum metu futurorum perterritus, Attilae se tradere pollicetur, & Aurelianam civitatem Galliae, ubi tunc consistebat, in ejus jura transducere.[1] Quod ubi Theodericus, & Aetius agnovere, magnis aggeribus eandem urbem ante adventum Attilae destruunt, suspectumque custodiunt Sangibanum, & inter suos anxiliares medium statuunt cum propria gente. Igitur Attila Rex Hunnorum tali perculsus eventu, diffidens suis copiis, metuens inire conflictum, intusque fugam revolvens, ipso funere tristiorem, statuit per haruspices futura inquirere. Qui more solito nunc pecorum fibras, nunc quasdam venas in abrasis ossibus intuentes, Hunnis infausta denuntiant. Hoc tamen quantulum praedixere solatii, quod summus hostium ductor de parte adversa occumberet, relictâque victoriâ, sua morte triumphum foedaret. Cùmque Attila necem Aetii, quod ejus motibus obviabat, vel cum sua perditione duceret expetendam, tali praesagio solicitus, ut erat consiliorum in rebus bellicis exquisitor, circa nonam diei horam praelium sub trepidatione committit, ut, si non secus cederet, nox imminens subveniret. Convenere partes, ut diximus, in Campos Catalaunicos.

[1] A. contradere.

Caput XXXVIII

Positio loci, quo in Catalaunicis campis praelium inter Romanos, & Hunnos est commissum, & descriptio utriusque aciei.

Erat autem positio loci declivi tumore, in modum collis[1] excreescens, quem uterque cupiens exercitus obtinere, quia loci opportunitas non parvum beneficium conferret, dextram partem Hunni cum suis, sinistram Romani, & Vesegothae cum auxiliariis occuparunt. Relictoque de cacuminis ejus jugo certamine, dextrum cornu[2] cum Vesegothis Theodoricus tenebat, sinistrum Aetius cum Romanis, collocantes in medio Sangibanum, quem superiùs retulimus praefuisse Alanis, providentes cautione militari, ut eum, de cujus animo minus praesumebant, fidelium turba concluderent. Facilè namque adsumit pugnandi necessitatem, cui fugiendi imponitur difficultas. E diverso verò fuit Hunnorum acies ordinata, ut in medio Attila cum suis fortissimis locaretur, sibi potiùs Rex hac ordinatione prospiciens, quatenus inter gentis suae robur positus, ab imminenti periculo redderetur exceptus. Cornua verò ejus multiplices populi, & diversae nationes, quas ditioni suae subdiderat, ambiebant. Inter quos Ostrogotharum praeeminebat exercitus, Walamire, & Theodemire, & Widemire germanis ductantibus, ipso etiam Rege, cui tunc serviebant, nobilioribus: quia Amalorum generis eos potentia illustrabat, eratque & Gepidarum agmine innumerabili Rex ille fortissimus, & famosissimus Ardaricus, qui ob nimiam suam fidelitatem

[1] A. in editum collis.

[2] A. Relicto de cacumine ejus jugo certamini; dextrum itaque cornu.

erga Attilam, ejus consiliis intererat. Nam perpendens Attila sagacitatem suam,[1] eum, & Walamirem Ostrogotharum Regem super caeteros regulos diligebat. Erat namque Walamir secreti tenax, blandus alloquio, doli ignarus, Ardaricus fide, & consilio, ut diximus, clarus. Quibus non immeritò contra parentes Vesegothas debuit credere pugnatoribus.[2] Reliqua autem, si dici fas est, turba regum, diversarumque nationum ductores, ac si satellites, nutibus Attilae attendebant, & ubi ocolo annuisset, absque aliqua murmuratione cum timore, & tremore unusquisque adstabat, aut certè quod jussus fuerat, exsequebatur. Sed solus Attila Rex omnium regum, super omnes, & pro omnibus solicitus erat. Fit ergo de loci, quem diximus, opportunitate certamen. Attila suos dirigit, qui cacumen montis invaderent, sed à Thorismundo, & Aetio praeventus est, qui eluctati collis excelsa ut conscenderent, superiores effecti sunt, venientesque Hunnos montis beneficio facilè turbavere.

Caput XXXIX

Attilae oratio ad Hunnos, quâ eos ad praelium adversùs Romanos ineundum exhortatur.

Tunc Attila, cum videret exercitum causa praecedente turbatum, eum tali ex tempore credit alloquio confirmandum. Post victorias tantarum gentium, post orbem, si consistatis, edomitum, ineptum judicaverim, tanquam ignaros rei, verbis acuere. Quaeret hoc aut novus ductor, aut inexpertus exercitus. Nec mihi fas est aliquid vulgare dicere, nec

[1] A. societate sua.

[2] Pugnaturis, Garetius al. pugnaturum.

vos oportet audire. Quid autem aliud vos quàm bellare consueti[1] ? Aut quid forti[2] suavius, quàm vindictam manu quaerere ? Magnum munus à natura animum ultione satiare. Aggrediamur ergo hostem alacres, audaciores sunt semper, qui inferunt bellum. Adunatas despicite dissonas gentes. Indicium pavoris est societate defendi. En ante impetum terroribus jam feruntur, excelsa quaerunt, tumulos capiunt, & sera poenitudine in campis munitiones efflagitant. Nota vobis sunt, quàm sint levia Romanorum arma : primo etiam non dico vulnere, sed ipso pulvere gravantur. Dum inordinatè[3] coëunt, & acies, testudinemque connectunt, vos confligite, praestantibus animis, ut soletis, despicientesque eorum acies, Alanos invadite, in Vesegothas incumbite. Inde nobis est citam victoriam quaerere, unde se continet bellum. Abscissa[4] autem nervis mox membra relabuntur,[5] nec potest stare corpus, cui ossa subtraxeris. Consurgant animi, furor solitus intumescat. Nunc consilia Hunni, nunc arma depromite, aut vulneratus quis adversarii mortem deposcat, aut illaesus hostium clade satietur. Victuros nulla tela convenient,[6] morturos, & in otio fato praecipitant, postremò cur fortuna Hunnos tot gentium victores adsereret,[7] nisi ad certaminis hujus gaudia praeparasset ? Quis denique Maeotidarum iter aperiret majoribus nostris tot seculis clausum, ac secretum ?[8]

[1] A vobis, quàm bellare consuetum est.
[2] A. aut quid viro forti.
[3] A. in ordine.
[4] Garetius fortè abscissis, & ita in A.
[5] A. dilabuntur.
[6] A. victuris nulla tela conveniunt.
[7] A. asseret.
[8] A. Quis denique Meotidarum inter majores nostros aperuit tot saeculis clausum secretum.

Quis adhuc inermibus cedere faciebat armatos? Faciem Hunnorum non poterit ferre adunata collectio. Non fallor eventu: hic campus est,[1] quem nobis tot prospera promiserant.[2] Primus in hostes tela conjiciam. Si quis potuerit Attila pugnante ocium ferre, sepultus est. His verbis accensi, in pugnam cuncti praecipitantur.

Caput XL

Successus praelii commissi inter Romanos, & Vesegothas adversùs Hunnos. Theoderici Regis mors. Attila se plaustris vallat.

Et quamvis haberent res ipsae formidinem, praesentia tamen Regis cunctationem haerentibus auferebat. Manu manibus congrediuntur, bellum atrox, multiplex, immane, pertinax, cui simile nulla usquam narrat antiquitas, ubi talia gesta referuntur, ut nihil esset, quod in vita sua conspicere potuisset egregius, qui hujus miraculi privaretur aspectu. Nam si senioribus credere fas est, rivulus memorati campi humili ripa prolabens, peremptorum vulneribus sanguine multo provectus, non auctus imbribus, ut solebat, sed liquore concitatus insolito, torrens factus est cruoris augmento. Et quos illic coëgit in aridam sitim vulnus inflictum, fluenta mixta clade traxerunt:[3] ita constricti sorte miserabili sordebant, potantes sanguinem, quem fudere sauciati. Hic Theodericus Rex dum adhortans discurreret exercitum, equo depulsus, pediqusque suorum conculcatus, vitam matura senectute conclusit. Alii verò dicunt eum

[1] A. Nisi fallor. [2] A. Quem nobis tot prospera promiserunt.
[3] A. detraxerunt.

interfectum telo Andagis de parte Ostrogotharum, qui tunc Attila num sequebantur regimen.[1] Hoc fuit, quod Attilae praesagio haruspices priùs dixerant, quamquam ille de Aetio suspicaretur. Tunc Vesegothae dividentes se ab Alanis, invadunt Hunnorum catervas, & penè Attilam trucidassent: nisi priùs providus fugisset, & se, suosque illico intra septa castrorum, quae plaustris vallata habebat, reclusisset. Quamvis fragile mumimentum, tamen quaesierunt subsidium vitae,[2] quibus paulò ante nullus poterat muralis agger obsistere. Thorismund autem Regis Theoderici filius, qui cum Aetio collem anticipans, hostes de superiori loco proturbaverat, credens se ad agmina propria pervenire, nocte caeca ad hostium carpenta ignarus incurrit. Quem fortiter dimicantem quidam capite vulnerato equo dejecit, suorumque providentiâ[3] liberatus, à praeliandi intentione desiit. Aetius verò similiter noctis confusione divisus, cum inter hostes medios vagaretur, trepidus ne quid incidisset adversi Gothis, inquirens,[4] tandemque ad socia castra perveniens, reliquum noctis scutorum defensione transegit. Postera die luce orta, cùm cadaveribus plenos campos aspicerent, nec audere Hunnos erumpere, suam arbitrantur esse victoriam, scientesque Attilam non nisi magna clade confusem, bello confugisse,[5] cùm tamen nihil ageret, vel prostratus abjectum, sed strepens[6] armis tubis canebat,

[1] A. Quí tunc Attilae sequebatur regimen.

[2] A. enim fragili munimine eorum quaesierit, subsidium vitae.

[3] A. prudentia. [4] A. adversi, Gothos inquirit.

[5] A. magna clade confossum bella fugere.

[6] A. velut prostratus, aut abjectum se demonstrabat, sed strepens.

incussionemque minabatur; velut leo venabulis pressus, speluncae aditus obambulans, nec audet insurgere, nec desinit fremitibus vicina terrere, sic bellicosissimus Rex victores suos turbabat inclusus. Conveniunt itaque Gothi, Romanique, & quid agerent de superato Attila deliberant. Placet eum obsidione fatigari, qui annonae copiam non habebat, quando ab ipsius sagittariis intra septua castrorum locatis, crebris ictibus arceretur accessus. Fertur autem desperatis in rebus praedictum. Regem adhuc & in supremo magnanimem, equinis sellis construxisse pyram, seseque, si adversarii irrumperent, flammis injicere voluisse, ne aut aliquis ejus vulnere laetaretur, aut in potestatem tantorum hostium gentium dominus perveniret.[1]

Caput XLI

Thorismund Theoderico Regi patri suo exsequias parat, & consilio Ætii Patricii, qui Hunnis funditus interemptis, malè à Gothis metuebat Imperio Romano se recipit, & Patri succedit; Franci, & Gepidae mutua clade se atterunt, numerus caesorum in praelio inter Romanos, & Attilam.

Verùm inter has obsidionum moras Vesegothae Regem filii patrem requirunt, admirantes ejus absentiam, dum felicitas fuerit subsequuta. Cùmque diutiùs exploratum, ut viris fortibus mos est, inter densissima cadavera reperissent, cantibus honoratum,[2] inimicis spectantibus abstulerunt. Videres

[1] Fortè legendum, aut in potestatem bestium tantarum gentium dominus, &c., ita A.

[2] A. honoribus.

Gothorum globos dissonis vocibus confragosos, adhuc inter bella furentia funeri reddidisse culturam. Fundebantur lacrymae, sed quae viris fortibus impendi solent: nostra mors[1] erat. sed Hunno teste gloriosa, unde hostium putaretur inclinata fore superbia, quando tanti Regis efferre cadaver cum suis insignibus inspiciebant. At Gothi Theoderico adhuc justa solventes, armis insonantibus regiam deserunt majestatem, fortissimusque Thorismund benè gloriosus, ad manes[2] carissimi patris, ut decebat filium, exequias est prosequutus. Quod postquam peractum est, orbitatis dolore commotus, & virtutis impetu, qua valebat, dum inter reliquias Hunnorum, mortem patris vindicare contendit: Aetium Patricium, ac si seniorem, prudentiâque maturum, de hac parte consuluit, quid sibi esset in tempore faciendum. Ille verò metuens ne Hunnis funditus interemptis,[3] à Gothis Romanorum premeretur Imperium, praebet hac suasione consilium, ut ad sedes proprias remearet, regnumque quod pater reliquerat, arriperet: ne germani ejus opibus sumptis paternis. Vesegotharum regnum pervaderent,[4] graviterque dehinc cum suis, & quod pejus est, miserabiliter pugnaret. Quo responso non ambigue, ut datum est, sed pro sua potiùs utilitate suscepto, relictis Hunnis, redit ad Gallias. Sic humana fragilitas dum suspicionibus occurrit, magna rerum agendarum occasione intercipitur. In hoc enim famosissimo, & fortimissimarum gentium bello ab utrisque partibus CLXII,[5] millia

[1] A. nam mors, &c.

[2] A. bene gloriosus manens, carissimi, &c. [3] A. eversis.

[4] A. germanus ejus, opibus assumptis paternis, regnum invaderet. [5] A. CLXV.

caesa referuntur, exceptis XC,[1] millibus Gepidarum, & Francorum, qui ante congressionem publicam noctu sibi occurrentes, mutuis concidêre vulneribus, Francis pro Romanorum, Gepidis pro Hunnorum parte pugnantibus. Attila igitur discessione cognita Gothorum, quod de inordinatis[2] colligi solet, & inimicorum magìs aestimans dolum, diutius se intra castra[3] continuit. Sed ubi hostium absentia[4] sunt longa silentia consecuta, erigitur mens ad victoriam, gaudia praesumuntur, atque potentis Regis animus in antiqua fata revertitur. Thorismund ergo patre mortuo, in campis statim Catalaunicis, ubi & pugnaverat regia majestate subvectus, Tholosam ingreditur. Hic licèt fratrum, & fortium turba gauderet, ipse tamen sic sua initia moderatus est, ut nullius reperiret de regni successione certamen.

Caput XLII

Attila de Vesegotharum recessu à Romanis certior factus, ad oppressionem Romanorum omnibus viribus se confert. Aquilejam, Mediolanum, Ticinum vastat. Leo Papa ad eum accedit, & pacem Italiae certis conditionibus impetrat. Attila ad suas sedes ultra Danubium remeat.

Attila verò nacto occasione de recessu Vesegothrum, & quod saepè optaverat, cernens hostium solutionem per partes, mox jam securus ad oppressionem Romanorum movit procinctum, primaque aggressione Aquilejensem obsedit civitatem, quae

[1] A. XV.
[2] Garet. alias inopinatis, ita A.
[3] A. claustra.
[4] A. absentiam.

est metropolis Venetiarum, in mucrone, vel lingua Adriatici posita sinus. Cujus ab oriente muros Natissa amnis fluens, à monte Picis elambit, ibique cùm diu, multoque tempore obsidens, nihil penitùs praevaleret, fortissimis intrinsecus Romanorum militibus resistentibus: exercitu jam murmurante, & discedere cupiente, Attila deambulans circa muros, dum utrum solveret castra, an adhuc moraretur deliberat, animadvertit candidas aves, idest ciconias, quae in fastigio domorum nidificant, de civitate foetus suos trahere, atque contra morem per rura forinsecus comportare. Et ut hoc, sicut erat sagacissimus inquisitor, persensit, ad suos inquit: Respicite aves futurarum rerum providas perituram relinquere civitatem, casurasque arces periculo imminente deserere. Non hoc vacuum, non hoc credatur incertum: rebus praesciis consuetudinem mutat ventura formido. Quid plura? Animus suorum rursus ad oppugnandum Aquilejam inflammatur. Qui machinis constructis, omnibusque tormentorum generibus adhibitis, nec mora invadunt civitatem, spoliant, dividunt, vastantque crudeliter, ita ut vix ejus vestigia ut appareant,[1] reliquerint. Ex hinc jam audaciores, & necdum Romanorum sanguine satiati, per reliquas Venetûm civitates Hunni bacchabantur. Mediolanum quoque Liguriae metropolim, & quondam regiam urbem pari tenore devastant, necnon & Ticinum aequali sorte dejicunt, vicinaque loca saevientes allidunt, demoliunturque paenè totam Italiam. Cùmque ad Romam animus fuisset ejus attentus accedere, sui eum (ut Priscus refert historicus) removêre, non Urbi, cui inimici erant, consul-

[1] A. ut apparet.

entes, sed Alarici quondam Vesegotharum Regis objicientes exemplum, veriti Regis suis[1] fortunam, quia ille post fractam Romam diu non supervixerat, sed protinus rebus excessit[2] humanis. Igitur dum ejus animus ancipiti negotio inter ire, & non ire fluctuaret, secumque deliberans tardaret, placita[3] ei legatio à Roma advenit. Nam Leo Papa per se ad eum accedit in Acroventu Mambolejo,[4] ubi Mincius amnis commeantium frequentatione transitur. Qui mox[5] deposito exercitus furore, & rediens quà venerat, idest, ultra Danubium, promissa pace discessit: illud prae omnibus denuncians, atque interminando discernens,[6] graviora se in Italiam illaturum, nisi ad se Honoriam Valentiniani Principis germanam, filiam Placidiae Augustae, cum portione sibi regalium opum debita mitteret.[7] Ferebatur enim quia haec Honoria, dum propter aulae decus, ac[8] castitatem teneretur nutu fratris inclusa, clandestino[9] eunucho misso Attilam invitasset, ut contra fratris potentiam ejus patrociniis uteretur: prorsus indignum facinus, ut licentiam libidinis malo publico compararet.

[1] A. sui. [2] A. excesserit. [3] A. placida.
[4] Garet. alias agro Venetum Ambulejo. ita Ambros.
[5] A. Qui mox deposuit exercitatus furorem, & rediens quo venerat &c.
[6] A. decernens. [7] A. mitterent.
[8] A. ad castitatem. [9] A. clam.

IV

EX VITA MS. SANCTI ANIANI EPISCOPI AURELIANENSIS

Du Chesne: Historiae Francorum Scriptores Coaetanei (1636), *Vol. I, p.* 521.

HUNORUM gens perfida vaginâ suae habitationis egressa, crudelitate saevissima in plurimarum gentium frendebat pericula. Cuius ad satiandam rabiem, truculentus Attila tenebat regiam dignitatem. Cúmque vulgatum esset in populo, quòd suae ferocitatis impetu Gothis obviam properans, extenderet ad amnem Ligericum, ut subversis Aurelianensium moenibus, satiaret suae malitiae incrementa. Tunc vir Domini Anianus, non ut in defensione hominum speraret elegit, sed Apostolicae memor sententiae, qua per beatum Petrum praecipimur, Subditi estote propter Dominum, sive Regi quasi praecellenti, sive Ducibus, quasi ab eo missis ad vindictam malefactorum, laudem verò bonorum. Arelatensem urbem expetere decrevit, et Aiecium Patritium, qui sub Romano Imperio in Galliis Rempublicam gubernabat, videndum expetuit, ut ei furorem rebellium cum periculo suorum civium intimaret.

Itaque Arelatum veniens, multos Domini repperit Sacerdotes, qui ob varias necessitates adventantes, videre non poterant faciem Iudicis ob fastum poten-

tiae secularis. Sed cùm sanctus advenisset ibidem Anianus, divina gratiâ inspirante commonitus, protinus egressus est obviam supplex Aiecius. Et quem pompa regia Imperialibus fascibus reddebat inclytum, Sacerdotalis gratia reddidit ad sibi conciliandum subiectum. Quem cùm ille benigniter inquisisset, cur vir sanctus laborem tam longi itineris assumpsisset, ille prudenti usus alloquio, vel egregii praedicatoris exemplo, priùs pro aliorum utilitatibus omnia petens obtinuit, et tunc demum causam adventus sui auribus principalibus intimavit. Simulque plenus prophetiae spiritu, VIII. Kal. Iulii diem esse praedixit, quo bestia crudelis gregem sibi creditum laniandum decerneret. petens ut tunc praedictus Patricius veniendo succurreret. Videns Aiecius florem torrentis eloquii, acumen ingenii in viro Dei sanctitatis gratiâ comitante, omnia praestitit, quicquid Sacerdos expetiit, et benignè se venire ut ille suggesserat repromisit. Quo obtento, vir Domini valedicens seculi Principi, ad propriam regessus est civitatem: et plebem suam, quae de Pastoris moerebat absentia, spiritalia confortabat in gaudia; praeparante populo iterum omnia, quae ad repellenda hostium iacula, portis, muris, vel turribus fuerant opportuna. ——:.

Nec post longum interim intervallum cruentus Attila murorum vallans ambitum, omne suae malitiae argumentum in iamdictae civitatis convertit interitum. Sed Pontifex fixus in Domino, per muri ambulatorium Sanctorum gestans pignora, suavi vocis organo more cantabat Catholico. Interim hostilis exercitus tela iactabat instantiùs, atque cum arietibus latera muri crebris quatiebat impulsibus. Tunc fugiente ad

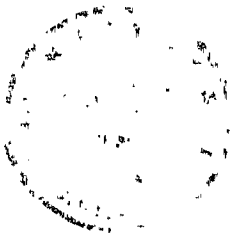
Ecclesiam populo, sanctus Anianus forti eos animo esse monebat in Domino, numquam fuisse deceptum quicumque firmiter sperasset in Christo. Ipse verò festinanter murum ascendit, et tacitus respexit ad coelum, ac pias aures Domini intima prece pulsavit. Cúmque sibi divinum auxilium adesse sensisset, repentè contra barbaros expuit. Tantáque subitò cum sputo eodem moles pluviae descendit, et impiorum impetum triduana inundatione compressit, ut nequaquam se ullus pugnaturus ex hostibus transferre in locum alterum potuisset. ——:.

Cessante igitur nimbo profluo, sanctus Anianus ad Attilae pergit tentorium, pro sibi commisso rogaturus populo. Spretus à perfido responso contrario, civitatis sese retulit claustro. Postera autem die, apertis portarum repagulis, Attilae Proceres ingressi sunt Aurelianis. Sortéque ad dividendum populum missa, onerabat plaustra innumera de plebis capta substantia. Iubens crudelis impietas, ut immineret subditis dura captivitas. Cúmque sanctus Anianus populum ammoneret, ut nec sic quoque desperarent de Domino, nihílque esse Deo invalidum, qui suos tueri praevalet etiam sub momento: repentè more prophetico sanctus Anianus est translatus à Domino, atque in eodem loco, ubi Aiecius Patricius cum suo degebat exercitu, secum pariter Torsomodo[1] Rege Gothorum, ostensus militi talia dedit mandata Patricio. "Vade, inquit, et dic filio meo Aiecio, quia si hodie ad civitatem adesse distulerit venire, iam crastina nihil proderit." His dictis, statim recessit. Et quia divina virtute hoc opus actum fuerat, miles sapiens recognovit. Statímque ad Aiecium pergens,

[1] Al. Torismodo.

rem per ordinem pandit. Tunc ille laetus redditus, et victoria iam securus, utpote divina revelatione commonitus, unà cum Theodoro et Torsomodo[1] Regibus, vel suó ac Gothorum exercitu, equum ascendit, ac concitus pergit. Nec mora Aurelianis pervénit, hostes imparatos repperit. Tantaeque caedis stragem super eos exercuit, ut nulli dubium fieret, quin meritis Aniani Pontificis flexus ad misericordiam Dominus Rex coelestis vindictam hanc exerceret per suos satellites, quos honore ditaverat Regiae dignitatis. Itáque alii succubuerunt gladiis, alii coacti timore tradebant se gurgiti Ligeris, sortituri finem mortis. Sanctus verò Anianus plures per suam precem eripuit, quos coram se trucidandos aspexit. reddens scilicet bona pro malis, multi ne morerentur obtinuit, nisi quos repentinus hostium furor oppressit. Reliqua pars Hunorum, quae ibidem prostrata non cecidit, fugae praesidium expetunt: donec iudicante Domino, in loco qui vocatur Mauriacus trucidanda gladiis mortis sententiam expectaret. ——: .

[1] Torismodo.



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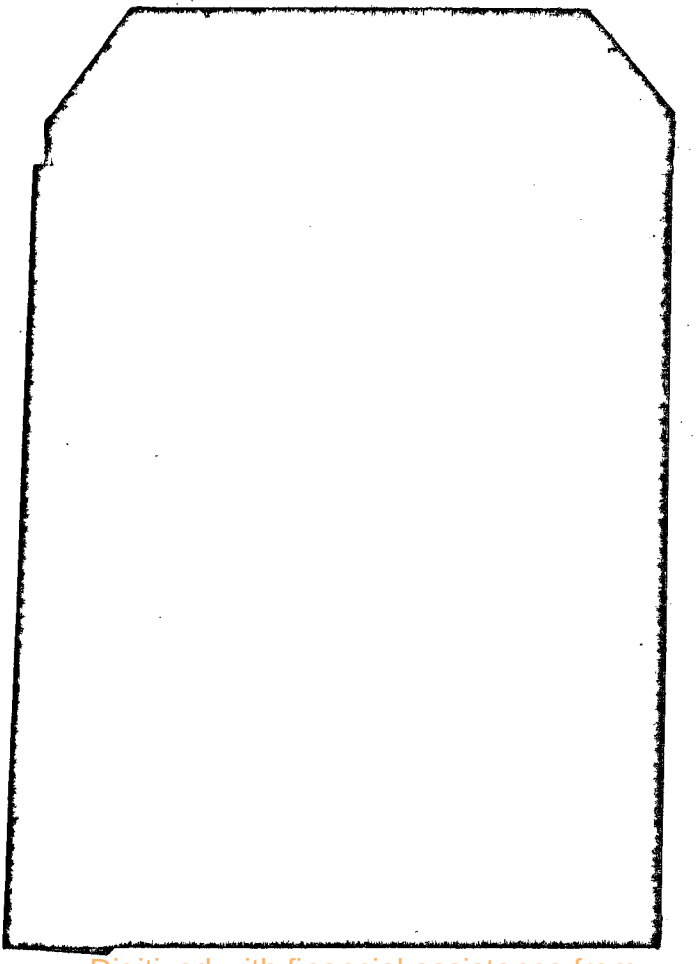

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